

# Fluxus Heidelberg Center BLOG

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This FHC BLOG will contain an overview of all news we find and get in connection to Fluxus. Articles, publications, events, celebrations, Biographies, you name it. Every month the collection of the blog will be published on the FHC website as a digital archive

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2009

## 31 Secret Truths - Fluxus Poetry by Litsa Spathi



31 Secret Truths - 2009 by Litsa Spathi - Germany/Netherlands

Lock box containing 31 wine corks and wine opener hidden inside of a box resembling a cloth bound book. Front and back covers open independently. The box is part of the Fluxmuseum Collection in Texas - USA. The box was created as a contribution to the Fluxhibition #3: Thinking Inside of the Box - Boxes, Cases, Kits and Containers.

Labels: [Fluxmuseum](#), [Fluxus Video](#), [Litsa Spathi](#), [USA](#)

posted by Fluxus Heidelberg Center @ [3:07 AM](#)

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 03, 2009

## Article by Charles Dreyfus - FLUXUS



AT THE BEGINNING OF December 1961, John Cage explained a passage from his book Silence starting with La Monte Young's concerns (repetition of

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## Fluxus Heidelberg Videos

Explanation of technical details about some videos made by the Fluxus Heidelberg Center. This booklet also contains some appendixes with texts previously published by the Fluxus Heidelberg Center (Litsa Spathi & Ruud Janssen).

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## Textual Architectures Sourcebook

Textual Architectures Sourcebook. Yes we

or playing a single sound over and over again); he concluded the interview hoping that Europeans become more American.

"My opinion is, not that it does something to me, but that I am able to feel in a different way, like I never felt before."<sup>1</sup>

La Monte Young discovered Cage during summer 1959, at the Stockhausen Seminar in Darmstadt ("The Composition as a Process" in which Cage developed his ideas on indeterminate music in relation to its execution); at that time, Young worked on the West Coast where Cage was practically unknown.

The following summer, back in California, he took part along with Terry Riley, Warner Jenson and Bill Spencer in the creative workshop of choreographer Ann Halprin, at Kentfield. From the interview by Yvonne Rainer with Ann Halprin one can outline better the meaning of the use of doors and windows, as well as of the walls' and floors' resonance in the room in which she works.

"We utilized objects and accessories, we made use of the space in a definite way. I wanted to isolate these elements. I began to work by means of a system, thanks to which all those things became independent from the phenomenon of cause and effect; to make the music do THIS, one shouldn't have to do THAT."<sup>2</sup> In the mid '50s, George Brecht and Jackson Mac Low had also explored the diverse possibilities of the indeterminate; then John Cage invited them to present their works in his class which began in the summer of 1958 at New York's 12th Street West. This New School for Social Research seminar was attended by Al Hansen, Dick Higgins, Allan Kaprow, composers Maxfield and Toshi Ichiyanagi (Yoko Ono's first husband), etc., and by irregular visitors: Jim Dine, Larry Poons, George Segal. As yet, a study had not been made on the many performances derived from Cage's classes (New York Audiovisual Group, etc.); individuals coming from the San Francisco area made their works of that period known in New York: Simone Forti, Robert Morris, Walter de Maria, Terry Jennings, Terry Riley, Dennis Johnson, Joseph Byrd. George Maciunas attended Maxfield's classes, where he met Young; thanks to him, Maciunas, who has a degree in the History of Art and Musicology, plunged into the avant-garde. This man of Lithuanian origin, though, was certainly not inactive. He funded an orchestra of Renaissance music, playing on copies of ancient instruments he imported from East Europe along with stocks of food preserves; plus a full-time job as a designer at Knoll and in a gallery on the first floor of 925 Madison Avenue; this gallery, A/G — A for Almius (Salcius, his partner), and G for George — exhibited, according to Higgins, "terrible modern art."<sup>3</sup> Two series of performances most particularly attract our attention: those in Yoko Ono's Studio at 112 Chambers Street, with La Monte Young as the organizer, which took place episodically from December 18, 1960, to June 30, 1961; and those by George Maciunas in his own gallery from March 14 to June 30, 1961.

The name Fluxus appeared for the first time on an invitation card to three conferences by Maciunas, "Musica Antiqua et Nova," from April 25 to May 16, 1961: "a three-dollar contribution will help to publish Fluxus magazine". Such publication projects would come to occupy just as important a place as performance within the history of Fluxus.

When the poet Chester Anderson left New York for California in 1959, his magazine

Beatitude split in two; he asked Young to take care of an issue of Beatitude East. The magazine disappeared, and along with Anderson, the documents as well; their reappearance, and the joint efforts of Young and Mac Low allowed Maciunas to compose the layout of this book An Anthology before his departure for Wiesbaden in November 1961. Ready for printing in October 1961, An Anthology, of which certain documents had already been published in 1959, were finally printed by Young and Mac Low in 1963.

Among the contributors to An Anthology living in Europe, we find the names

can (fly), is the result of a Fluxus performance done by Litsa Spathi documenting the election of Barack Obama as first black president of the USA. The text of a newspaper article formed the basis for Fluxus Poetry. This book contains the complete set of works and an explanation of the performance. A biography of Litsa Spathi is included.

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## Textual Architectures

Textual Architectures, Yes we can (fly), is the result of a Fluxus performance done by Litsa Spathi documenting the election of Barack Obama as first black president of the USA. The text of a newspaper article formed the basis for Fluxus Poetry. This book contains the final set of 24 works and an explanation of the performance. A biography of Litsa Spathi is included.

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## Fluxus Flesh Power

Fluxus Flesh Power is a unique publication with Fluxus Poetry where computer generated anagrams are presented both in text format as visual format. The book also includes a biography of the artist.

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## Performances Fluxus Heidelberg 2003-2005

B&W version. An overview of the Fluxus Performances done for the Fluxus Heidelberg Center by Litsa Spathi and Ruud Janssen. This publication contains an overview of the first performances done from 2003 till 2005. The texts of the scores and many B&W photos are published in this book.

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of Claus Bremer, Nam June Paik, Dieter Roth and Emmett Williams. Daniel Spoerri met Bremer and between 1957 and 1959 became the assistant of playwright Gustav-Rudolf Seller, the Director of the Landestheater of Darmstadt, where Bremer himself was Stage Director; in collaboration with Bremer he published *Beispiele für das dynamische Theater*,<sup>4</sup> and on his own, *Über das Autotheater* (1959)<sup>5</sup>; he initiated Emmett Williams to concrete poetry; Roth, who was passing through Paris, joined Spoerri's selection *Art et Mouvement* of the Festival d'Avant-Garde (1951) at Porte de Versailles (November 18 - December 14, 1960). Thus, in November 1961, George Maciunas arrived in Germany and immediately got in touch with Nam June Paik, the 'European from Korea,' already famous on the other side of the Atlantic for having cut off John Cage's tie. At the beginning of 1958, Paik's teacher in Freiburg, 12-tone composer Wolfgang Fortner, decided there was nothing more he could teach him, and found him a job at the Electronic Music Studio (Radio Cologne) founded by Herbert Eimert and subsequently entrusted to Stockhausen. But before going to Cologne, Paik saw Cage's *Music Walk* (October 14, 1958) at Gallery 22 by Jean Pierre Wilhelm in Düsseldorf, and fell in love with the indeterminate; he decided to meet Cage in his hotel room in Darmstadt and of Cage he retained the "sound collage" and "his sense of things which are out of order." He also saw "Dada, Dokumente einer Bewegung" at Düsseldorf Kunsthalle (1958), and one assumes that that was the determining shock, and not for Paik alone, who started making a few tapes before he felt a need for action whose violence is "the effect more than the cause;" he is aggressive, but only toward himself, as on November 13, 1959, again at Gallery 22, where his concert lasted six minutes: electronic music for three tape-recorders and a sheet of glass to be shattered; he turned a piano upside down in front of an audience of 'connoisseurs,' among whom several artists from Düsseldorf, like Joseph Beuys, Winfried Gaul, Richard Goetz, Hoem. The concert was titled *Homage to John Cage*. Then, Mary Bauermeister's studio (she was Stockhausen's wife) in Cologne became the "anti-Radio Cologne" site, and starting in 1960 it presented works by George Brecht and La Monte Young; here began Paik's fame in the United States. On the other hand, Wolf Vostell seldom attended Mary Bauermeister's studio, since action music did not satisfy him completely; he declared that the action per se was a work of art. Beginning in 1958, following the Studio's indifference towards his idea of 'electronic vision,' he made the "TV décoll/ages" whose first score, "TV décoll/ages for millions of spectators" is dated 1959. George Maciunas visited Vostell for the first time in his Cologne studio in April 1962; on his table, there was the project for the first *Décoll/ages*, which came out for the Neo-Dada in der Musik concert (June 16, 1962). November-April: more than five months had passed since Maciunas arrived in Germany.

Maciunas thought big. To begin with, he had planned a year and a half of concerts, from June 1962 (Berlin) to January 1964 (Tokyo), passing through Moscow etc. Everything had been planned: a big city or capital a month, and Fluxus magazine gathering all local information into a large United Front. The Neo-Dada in der Musik concert managed to take place thanks to Jean Pierre Wilhelm, but was organized by Paik. Had this concert been organized by Maciunas, "He was kind of mad, and of course he understood that this new art would be known before he made Fluxus; above all because of the concert organized by Paik and then, the same evening, because of the first issue of *Décoll/ages*." (Interview by C.D. with Vostell). "Vostell always tried to be in competition; one never gets to do anything if we compete with the same thing, but he needed competition, and sometimes collaboration... (unintelligible tape) — so that Vostell never really belonged to Fluxus." (Interview by C.D. with Maciunas).

Then why did Vostell follow this horrible tyrant, who dared to fire some virtuoso violinists from Vienna because they did not go to sleep at 10 P.M.? And what about Maciunas who got rid of Vostell? What was the magic power which enabled Maciunas to reject Paik's personal concert in the name of the collective? To make the situation more complicated, before the Neo-Dada in

## Performances Fluxus Heidelberg 2003-2005

Colour Version. An overview of the Fluxus Performances done for the Fluxus Heidelberg Center by Litsa Spathi and Ruud Janssen. This publication contains an overview of the first performances done from 2003 till 2005. The texts of the scores and many full colour photos are published in this book.

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## Rail Track

Visual Poetry and Fluxus Performance by Litsa Spathi. A Journey from Breda to Munich that is presented in a visual way.

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## Rail Track - Variation 2

Rail Track - Variation 2 has the same content as the first edition. It contains Visual Poetry and Fluxus Performance by Litsa Spathi. A Journey from Breda to Munich that is presented in a visual way. Only the cover is different.

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## Balla Balla Size XL

Balla Balla Trilogy is a conceptual work where Visual Poetry and a Fluxus Performance are combined. This is part SIZE XL of this Trilogy. The final result of the performance is the installation of these three books

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## Balla Balla Size XXL

Balla Balla Trilogy is a conceptual work where Visual Poetry and a Fluxus Performance are combined. This is part SIZE XXL of this Trilogy. The final result of

der Musik concert, on June 9, in the Parnass Gallery, presented by Rolf Jährling, the concert Neo-Dada in New York took place (that is also the title of Maciunas's exposé); Vostell and Paik were absent. Can one speak of sabotage? Ben Patterson and Maciunas (the two Americans!) presented works by Higgins, Riley, Jed Curtis, without forgetting their own. And on the very same day of Maciunas's fast passage through the streets and at the Girardon Gallery in Paris, along with Patterson and Robert Filliou, Vostell made his happening *Petite Ceinture*, *Cityrama II* in the same city (July 3, 1962).

Festa Fluxorum, then, began its tour throughout Europe: 14 concerts in Wiesbaden in

September 1962, interpreted by Alison Knowles and Dick Higgins (arrived from New York), Paik, Patterson, Maciunas, Williams, Pierre Mercure, Karl Eric Welin, Vostell.

Maciunas, Paik, Williams, Addi Koepke, Filliou, Vostell, Higgins, Knowles, performed six concerts in Copenhagen, in November, while in Paris, the following month, Tomas Schmit and Daniel Spoerri joined the company with *Domaine Poétique* staged by Jean-Loup Philippe (Filliou, Gherasim Luca, Jean-Clarence Lambert, François Dufréne, Brion Gysin).

In February 1963, the experiment with Joseph Beuys took place in Düsseldorf; Alison

Knowles and Dick Higgins spread the good news by themselves in Stockholm and Oslo in March, followed once more by Copenhagen and Amsterdam in June; finally Nice, where Maciunas was received by Ben Vautier (from July 25 to August 3, before going back to New York in September).

The performers traveled with their own means, to free spaces they themselves discovered; no fees and, for the composers, no royalties (besides their own work, they played compositions by Cage, George Brecht, Robert/Bob Watts, La Monte Young, Jackson Mac Low, etc.); Maciunas, the coordinator, in spite of his poor health, spent all his nights making poster-programs, whose contents were often far removed from the actual possibilities of the executions; in a specially made suitcase, he carried the smaller accessories. In September 1963, Maciunas went back to New York, where, during the Spring, the Yam Festival by George Brecht and Robert Watts had somehow kept the American scene busy. A totally theoretical group, then, could form itself around the Fluxus-Maciunas publications, performances, objects and films.

Of the projects, 10% were carried out and realized; 70% of that 10% was distributed free to the idea-givers; Maciunas had in fact produced all the projects (except, in recent years, the ones produced by Giancarlo Politi, Gino Di Maggio, etc.); he announced them and depending on the demand he made them by hand one by one; no bookkeeping and no problems of distribution (three collectors in 1975), which was carried out by the artists themselves. Certain works, like those by Ann Halprin (remainders not used for *An Anthology*) reappear 15 years later. Dick Higgins founded *Something Else Press* (1963) and recuperated his manuscript *Jefferson's Birthday/Postface* (1964) from one of Maciunas's forgotten zones. In 1964, under Henry Flynt's impetus, Maciunas became the executive director of a bureau for *Action Against Imperialistic Culture (A.A.I.C.)*; their second action consisted of picketing, on September 8, 1964, in front of New York's Judson Hall, where *Originale* by Stockhausen was to be performed. Henry Flynt (who introduced the concept of *Concept Art* back in 1961) blamed Stockhausen and his magazine *Die Reihe* for being a decorative element of West German ownership, but above all, he blamed him for a conference held at Harvard in 1958, in which Stockhausen had denigrated jazz; himself an exviolinist with La Monte Young, he composed and defended hillbilly music from North Carolina where he was born. Flux-schism: Paik and Higgins participated in *Originale*, while Flynt, Maciunas, Ay-O, Takako Saito, Tony Conrad and Ben remained outside.

A pioneer of SoHo, Maciunas set up seven real estate cooperatives between 1967 and 1968; because of his commitment to this project he

the performance is the installation of these three books

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## [Balla Balla Size X](#)

Balla Balla Trilogie is a conceptual work where Visual Poetry and a Fluxus Performance are combined. This is part SIZE X of this Trilogie. The final result of the performance is the installation of these three books.

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came close to dying, and in fact he lost an eye. There was endless fighting with hidden forces and local authorities. Maciunas managed to renovate these cast iron buildings, some of which are architectural masterpieces; this made speculation impossible, while communal arrangements assured for the future minimum overhead expenses which were managed democratically. Thus, beginning in 1967, Jonas Mekas started his film library on the ground floor of 80 Wooster Street (The Filmmaker's Film Library); as a matter of fact, this was SoHo's first public place, except for Flux-Hall, a tiny space at 359 Canal Street which housed performances as well as the Fluxus shop after Maciunas's return (1963). Eighty Wooster Street presented for the first time in the U.S. Hermann Nitsch's Origien Mysterien Theater in March 1968, as well as Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theater. Then in 1969-70, Maciunas tried to establish a 60-member cooperative on Ginger Island in the British Virgin Island; of its 230 acres, 11 were reserved for a Fluxus settlement; the day before the signing of the contract, the owner died. For the last two years, a 17-building village once more gave Maciunas the opportunity to express himself: a 'new Bauhaus' in the countryside of Massachusetts. But the latest news from my friend is very bad. He had to go back to New York wasted by illness where, on the 9th of last May, 1978, he died.

Charles Dreyfus is a performance artist and an art critic. He lives and works in Paris.

Notes:

1. Interview by Roger Reynolds, at Ann Arbor, beginning of December 1961, in John Cage, C.F. Peters Editions, Frankfurt 1962, p. 52.
2. Tulane Drama Review, volume 10 n. 2, New Orleans, Winter 1965, p.145.
3. Dick Higgins, Jefferson's Birthday/Postface, Something Else Press, New York 1964, p. 66.
4. In Movens, Wiesbaden 1960.
5. In Zero n. 3, Düsseldorf 1960.

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