

‘The Fluxus File’

(A didactic drama in three acts)

by **Arthur Six**

‘A Fluxus Folder’ — What is ‘fluxus’? — A Self-Tutorial

ACT I Sayings, Epigrams, and Witticisms (aka **‘fluxus fodder,’ flotsam and fecundity,** or, “You, Sir, are no *‘fluxist.’* ”)

Scene 1 (enter *art6* ‘stage left’: come in from the backdoor alley or look down from skylight, mezzanine or balcony inquiringly)

Querulus: Who’s to say what’s *‘fluxus’*?

Riposto: Who’s to say what’s **not** *‘fluxus’*?

“ . . . aaaannd . . . scene!”

ACT II **Issues of Context and Narrative** — Three ‘Mitzi’ Scenarios



ACT III Temporality, Media and Message (Mixed and Multi)—Riposto's Monologue:

“Much of understanding ‘fluxus’ lies in an awareness of multiple, on-going or concurrent mixed and multimedia—the graphic visual arts, theatre and performance, music and dance, poetry and prose—nothing is excluded or inherently taboo from the fluxist’s palette and vision—creatively and artistically commingled with elements of documented, pre-recorded, or real-time materials and composition. In a way, ‘fluxus’ seeks out interesting, atypical, and often skewed juxtapositions of seemingly incongruous things in order to find some continuity, thesis, or distinct ‘artistic auteurship.’

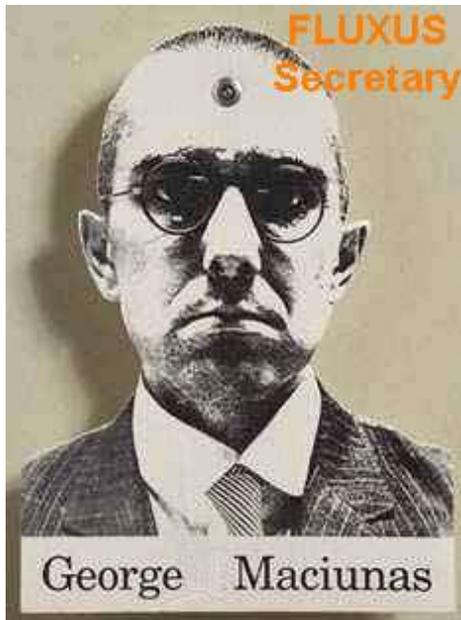
A good way to think about ‘fluxus’ is that something as seemingly as trivial as paper ephemera or ambient, incidental sound and noise may have just as much import and place as something supposedly grander and (conventionally and traditionally) more profound—like painting or performance.

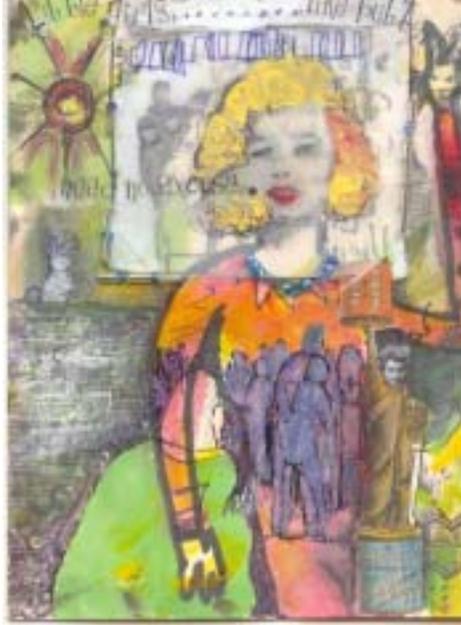
‘Fluxus’ and the ‘Fluxus’ movement—due to their democratic demographic and dispersion through media such as the U.S. mail, small letterpresses, and the modern copier machine—owe perhaps as much to the work of such disparate, ‘regional’ artists as **Louise Neaderland, Stephanie Brody Lederman**, the late **Davi Det Hompsom** (David E. Thompson), **Caryl Burtner, Mitzi Humphrey**, and others as they do to more well-known icons such as **Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Moholy-Nagy, Rene Magritte, Robert Rauschenberg, George Maciunas, John Cage, Yoko Ono, Andy Warhol, Lucas Samaras, Nam Jun Paik, Jenny Holzer, Gary Hill, Laurie Anderson**, et al.” *Finis TMH*

Fluxus Artists and Collaborators Not in ReCollage (Many of the ReCollage artists are also participating in other events and exhibitions of Fluxus Redux): Jimmy Warner, Andy Coppola, Caryl Burtner, Thomas M. Humphrey, Barbara Brown, TANGO, The Paper Shredder, Art*O*Mat*, Fluxus Driven, ISCA, Louise Neaderland, Lucy Lippard, Stephanie Brody-Lederman, Yuki Dixon, Michael Sulsona, R. (Ron) Eugene Brown, Polka Dot Arts, Lew Bailes, Lynn Bailes, AND MORE!

As well as the Fluxus ReCollage Mail Art Project, other ‘Re-Flux’ coming up in July include a second postcard workshop with instructor Mim Golub; a bumper-sticker bonanza featuring a van bedecked in bumper-stickers by art6 artist Andy Coppola; a display of ISCA art destined for donation to the VCU Cabell Library Collection; The Paper Shredder (to which the public is invited to shred their own paper evidence, secrets, and detritus throughout July); installations by Caryl Burtner, Lew Bailes, Mitzi Humphrey, and Michael Sulsona; Polka Dot Arts installation of drumhead mandalas, and the ever-popular Art*O*Mat with examples of dispensed art and the Art*O*Mat Calendar. The gallery will use its DVD player and TV recently donated by Henrietta Near, Willie Anne Wright, and Mitzi Humphrey to show experimental works by filmmakers Maura Pond and Todd Raviotta as well as videos from the art6 archives. Also: **Saturday, July 9, 8pm**—“Not the Beaten Track”—with musicians Ann Archer, Hal Carle, Heather Fairbanks, and Francis Church, Free. **Wednesday, July 20, 8pm**— Experimental, improv music event featuring N.Y. musicians Audrey Chen, Tatsuya Nakatani, and Susan Alcorn—with opening act, jazz and improv musician Darius Jones, \$5. **Sunday, July 24, 4pm**—Darius Jones and the Elizabeth Caroline Unit, featuring opera singer Sara Dyson, \$5.

For more about this exhibition and other upcoming art6 events, visit www.art6.org or phone 804.343.1406. To contact the editor of art6 and *BroadStrokes*, phone Thomas M. Humphrey at 804.794.7579. art6 is located at 6 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. Gallery hours are Wed.-Sun. 12-4pm. —We invite you to attend.





ReCollage Artists in Fluxus Redux at art6, July 2005. Participants in this fluxus mail art project co-curated by Mitzi Humphrey and Virginia Tyack include originators (artists who began each series of six cards and tracked its progress) and collaborators (artists who added to individual cards begun by the originators). Originators were Virginia Tyack, Henrietta Near, Marian Hollowell, Susan Svendsen, Cynthia Erdahl, Rita Root, Tricia Pearsall, Diego Sanchez, Santa Sergio Dehaven, Kathleen Westkaemper, Josiah Pearsall, and Mitzi Humphrey. There will be a silent auction of the ReCollage cards throughout the show. Minimum bid is \$10, and subsequent bids must be in increments of \$5. Proceeds will benefit art6.

Collaborators in the Fluxus ReCollage Mail Art Project: Cynthia King, Jennifer Yane, Lynn B. Stevens, Ana Edwards, Keithly Pierce, Georgia Terry, Julia Hauser, Penny Hanky, Kim Winters, John Bailey, Jesse Bailey, Art Bailey, Caleb Doody, Frances Wessells, Bret Payne, Mim Golub, Julie Wolfe, Curry Wolfe, Pam Shelor, Becky Jessee, Sara Jessee, Barry C. Fuchs, Andrew Felty, Angie Sturm, Cassady Rosenblum, Dana Frostick, Sheryl Humphrey, Edward Coppola, Sophia Pulkoski-Skeans, James Gilchrist, Celeste Ray, Marki Brown, Lynne Haas, Andrew Campbell, Debbie DaPrano, Mary Holland, Rob Carter, Isabel Scarpino, Amanda Reed, Chris Palmer, Eileen Kindle, Priscilla Busse, Lisa Kellner, Anonymous Was a Woman, Nancy Strube, Henry Leister, Laura Chessin, Brenda Giannini, J. M. Lucas, Jim Panos, Ida Navickis, Jeanne Minnix, Adam Courville, Becca Ladmer, Eileen Kindle, Emily Blake, Austin Tribble, Ann Mason Rumble, Laura Robertson, Sara Jones, Shann Palmer, Kathleen Forman, W. Kaplowitz, Kathy Levine, and Sandy Wheeler.





A few of the postcards from the ReCollage Mail Art Project, curated by Mitzi Humphrey and Virginia Tyack

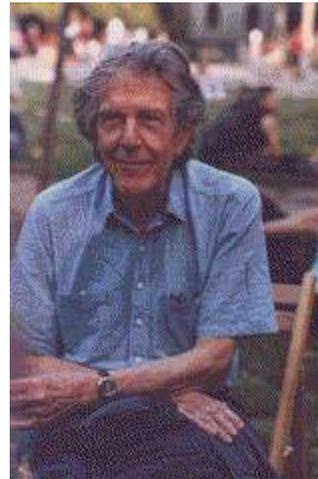
Ars longa vita brevis: Franklin Furnace regrets to announce the passing of Sharon Gilbert, a dedicated collage artist and book maker, some of whose books are shown in the ISCA collection of Fluxus Redux. Also, memorial gifts to art6 have been received in honor of Mitzi Humphrey's mother (and *BroadStrokes* Editor Thomas M. Humphrey's grandmother), Alta Ferguson Greene. She was followed in death two weeks later by her husband, father and grandfather of Mitzi and Thomas, Sterling Augustus "Gus" Greene. Additional memorial gifts to art6 have been received honoring longtime printmaking teacher at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Marilyn Bevilaqua, and in memory of artist Jane Ware's husband, Winslow Ware. art6 further extends condolences to Starr Foster of The Starr Foster Dance Project, whose father died in May. We were also saddened to hear of the passing of architect James Glavé, who conducted one of the first 'walk-throughs' of our gallery building at 6 East Broad Street.



Fluxus (from "to flow") is an art movement noted for the blending of different artistic disciplines, primarily visual art but also music and literature. Fluxus was founded in 1962 by **George Maciunas** (1931-1978), an Lithuanian-American artist who had moved to Germany to escape his creditors. Besides America and Europe, Fluxus also took root in Japan. Among its members were **Joseph Beuys**, **John Cage**, and **Yoko Ono** who explored media ranging from performance art to poetry to experimental music to film. They took the stance of opposition to the ideas of tradition and professionalism in the arts of their time, the Fluxus group shifted the emphasis from what an artist makes to the artist's personality, actions, and opinions. Throughout the 1960s and '70s (their most active period) they staged "action" events, engaged in politics and public speaking, and produced sculptural works featuring unconventional materials. Their radically untraditional works included, for example, the video art of Nam June Paik and the performance art of Beuys. The often playful style of Fluxus artists led to their being considered by some little more than a group of pranksters in their early years. Fluxus has also been compared to Dada and is seen as the starting point of mail art. Most notorious are the Fluxus performance pieces or "Event Scores." Fluxus artists differentiate Event Scores from "Happenings." Whereas happenings were meant to blur the lines between performer and audience, performance and reality, Fluxus performances were one-liners and sight gags. The performances sought to elevate the banal and dissemble the high culture of serious music. **Marcel Duchamp** and **Robert Rauschenberg** were highly influential to Fluxus. [source: en.wikipedia.org]



Jason II, 1962/80, Joseph Beuys



John Cage

Fluxus — An art movement begun in 1961/1962, which flourished throughout the 1960s, and into the 1970s. Characterized by a strongly Dadaist attitude, Fluxus promoted artistic experimentation mixed with social and political activism, an often celebrated anarchistic change. Although Germany was its principal location, Fluxus was an international avant-garde movement active in major Dutch, English, French, Swedish, and American cities. Its participants were a divergent group of individualists whose most common theme was their delight in spontaneity and humor. Fluxus members avoided any limiting art theories, and spurned pure aesthetic objectives, producing such mixed-media works as found poems, mail art, silent orchestras, and collages of such readily available materials as scavenged posters, newspapers, and other ephemera. Their activities resulted in many events or situations, often called "Aktions"—works challenging definitions of art as focused on objects—performances, guerilla or street theater, concerts of electronic music—many of them similar to what in America were known as "happenings." In Latin and other languages, "Fluxus" literally means "flow" and "change." Similarly, the related English word "flux" is used variously to mean "a state of continuous change," "a fusion," and "a gushing of fluid from a body." George Maciunas (Lithuanian-American, 1931-1978) coined the name Fluxus. He described it as "a fusion of Spike Jones, gags, games, Vaudeville, Cage and Duchamp." He coordinated and edited numerous Fluxus publications. According to George Maciunas, Fluxus intended to "purge the world of bourgeois sickness . . . of dead art," to "promote a revolutionary flood and tide in art, anti-art, promote non art reality . . ." and to "fuse the cadres of cultural, social, and political revolutionaries into a united front and action." [source: www.artlex.com]

The Fluxus movement emerged in New York in the 60's, took root in Europe, and eventually made its way to Japan. The movement embraced a new aesthetic that had already appeared on three continents. That aesthetic encompasses a reductive gesturalty (part Dada, part Bauhaus and part Zen) and presumes that all media and all artistic disciplines are fair game for combination and fusion. Fluxus presaged avant-garde developments over the last 40 years.

Fluxus objects and performances are characterized by minimalist but often expansive gestures based in scientific, philosophical, sociological, or other extra-artistic ideas and leavened with a sense of burlesque.

Yoko Ono may be the best-known individual associated with Fluxus (because of her obvious high-profile union with one of the most famous individuals in the world), but many artists have associated themselves with Fluxus since its emergence. In the '60s, when the Fluxus movement was most active, artists all over the globe worked in concert with a spontaneously generated but carefully maintained Fluxus network. Since then, Fluxus has endured not so much as a movement but as a sensibility—a way of fusing certain radical social attitudes with ever evolving aesthetic practices. Initially received as little more than an international network of pranksters, the admittedly playful artists of Fluxus were, and remain, a network of radical visionaries who have sought to change political and social, as well as aesthetic, perception.

Fluxus—as well as being influenced by and incorporating many interdisciplinary arts, humanities, and endeavors—also drew from, imbued, and in no small way, informed the existential, absurdist, left-of-center literature of writers such as Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, George Orwell, Franz Kafka, Vladimir Nabokov, Andre Breton, Jean Genet, Eugene Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, Dylan Thomas, John Osborne, Iris Murdoch, David Hare, and numerous other esteemed stalwarts of letters. Among the long lineage of film directors who presaged fluxus or whose works show distinctly fluxus overtones are Fritz Lang, Luis Bunuel, Alfred Hitchcock, Francois Truffaut, Jacques Tati, Michael Rohmer, Federico Fellini, Roberto Rossellini, and Michelangelo Antonioni, as well as the experimental, exhaustive, sometimes unwatchable exercises of Andy Warhol. And in music, fluxus elements may be seen as early as Franz Liszt, Bela Bartok, Arnold Schoenberg, and Igor Stravinsky—to the experimental works of John Cage and Philip Glass—through the album cover art, happenings, and mixed media conceptualness of 60's British Invasion titans the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Kinks, and Yardbirds (the latter with their all-night 'rave-ups,' or simply 'raves,' in which the band would build to a frenzied, frinetic, deafening crescendo and catharsis all in the midst of free-form dancing and mixed-media art)—to the glam couture, new wave punk and theatre of David Bowie, Lou Reed, and Talking Heads—right up through the 'world' beat and politic of iconoclastic bands such as Sex Pistols and the Clash. All smack of some fluxus. [by Peter Frank, reference: www.artcommotion.com]

Ay-O, Joseph Beuys, George Brecht, John Cage, Philip Corner, Robert Filliou, Henry Flynt, Ken Friedman, Al Hansen, Geoffrey Hendricks, Dick Higgins, Ruud Janssen, Ray Johnson, Alison Knowles, Jackson MacLow, Gustav Metzger, Larry Miller, Genesis P-Orridge, Ben Patterson, Robert Rauschenberg, Dieter Roth, Wim T. Schippers, Carolee Schneemann, Litsa Spathi, Daniel Spoerri, Yasunao Tone, Ben Vautier, Wolf Vostell, Emmett Williams, La Monte Young, and countless other avant-garde artists at the vanguard of fluxus have associated themselves with fluxus over the years.

art6 'Artist Spotlight' — Yoko Ono



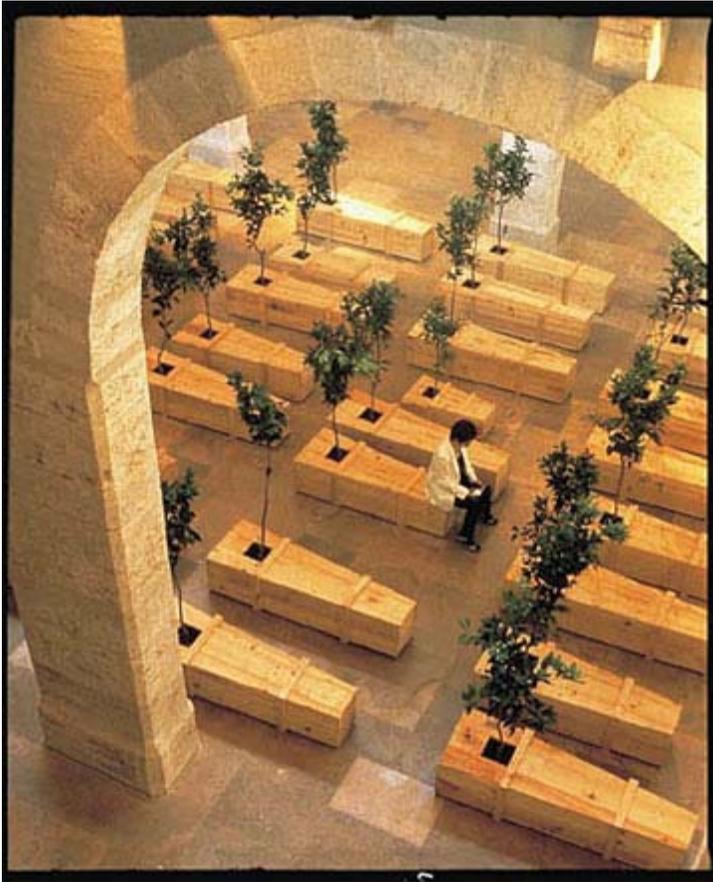
Well before she emerged into popular awareness as John Lennon's wife, **Yoko Ono** had established herself in vanguard art and music circles as one of the most daring, innovative and eccentric artist-performers of her time. As one of the founders of the Fluxus movement at the beginning of the 1960s, Ono helped identify and define the playful, subversive, visionary sensibility that has undergirded experimentation in all the arts ever since. Her poem-like verbal scores, her films, and her staged performances anticipated everything from minimalism to performance art, the furthest reaches of new cinema to the most extreme of Punk-New Wave music. Her performances made signal contributions to what Fluxus mastermind George Maciunas called "neo-Haiku theatre" and artist-historian Ken Friedman labeled "Zen vaudeville."



In the '60s, Ono took the common housefly as an alter ego. Clearly, the artist, mocked and maligned long before she began attracting the misguided ire of rock fans, regards the fly as an embodiment of her public persona—its apparent insignificance counterbalanced by its outsized ability to annoy. But even more important to Ono's associative thinking is the fly's constant, nervous "performing" and its elusively melodious buzz.

With her Fluxus colleagues, Ono has elevated the insubstantial to monumental status, allowing us to contemplate the magic of the ordinary, as well as to comprehend the ordinariness of the seemingly profound. This inversion, along with the inventive puckishness of her game-like concepts and activities, make her work endlessly provocative—at once irksome and inviting, loopy and lovely, teasing and teaching us to appreciate the intimate and elusive phenomena that comprise life. [by Peter Frank: [op cit](#)]

A few seminal fluxus artists:



Yoko Ono with **Ex It**, 1998
Installation of 100 coffins and 100 trees
Artwork courtesy of Lennon Photo Archive and Generalitat Valenciana
Photography by Miguel Angel Valero



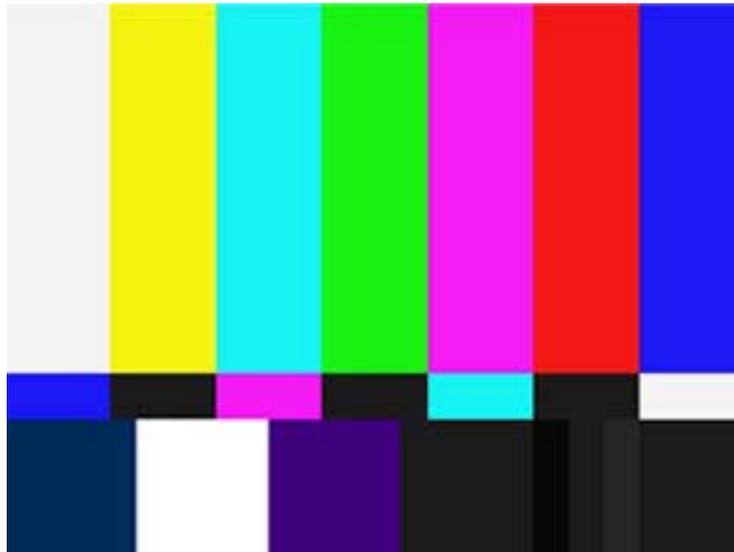
Nam June Paik



Techno Buddha



TV Buddha (1974), Nam June Paik, Closed Circuit video installation with bronze sculpture

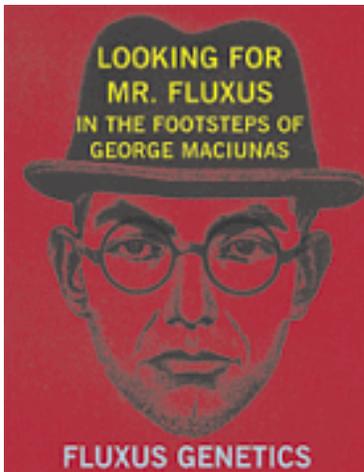




George Maciunas

FLUXMANIFESTO ON FLUXAMUSEMENT -VAUDEVILLE -ART? TO ESTABLISH ARTIST S NONPROFESSIONAL ,NONPARASITIC, NONELITE STATUS IN SOCIETY, HE MUST DEMONSTRATE OWN DISPENSABILITY, HE MUST DEMONSTRATE SELFSUFFICIENCY OF THE AUDIENCE, HE MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT ANYTHING CAN SUBSTITUTE ART AND ANYONE CAN DO IT. THEREFORE THIS SUBSTITUTE ART-AMUSEMENT MUST BE SIMPLE, AMUSING, CONCERNED WITH INSIGNIFICANCES, HAVE NO COMMODITY OR INSTITUTIONAL VALUE. IT MUST BE UNLIMITED, OBTAINABLE BY ALL AND EVENTUALLY PRODUCED BY ALL. THE ARTIST DOING ART MEANWHILE, TO JUSTIFY HIS INCOME, MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT ONLY HE CAN DO ART. ART THEREFORE MUST APPEAR TO BE COMPLEX, INTELLECTUAL, EXCLUSIVE, INDISPENSABLE, INSPIRED. TO RAISE ITS COMMODITY VALUE IT IS MADE TO BE RARE, LIMITED IN QUANTITY AND THEREFORE ACCESSIBLE NOT TO THE MASSES BUT TO THE SOCIAL ELITE.

ABOVE: FLUXMANIFESTO ON ART AMUSEMENT by GEORGE MACIUNAS, 1965



THE FIRST FRIENDSHIP IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

BILE

I WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DEBTS CONTRACTED BY ANYONE EXCEPT MYSELF.

-marcel Duchamp



Rose Sélavy

Bradley Lastname





Marcel Duchamp



fluxus

(at [art6](#))

