

***Proposed Text to Screen for FutureFluxus Performance '11
by pixel Reanimator / Andy Stringer***

I have stated previously: we have many options with discourse/texts... which, post analysis, we choose to reject or subsume...

However, a preferable formula for their 'creative' use/implementation in understanding our expanding digital hypertextual world and immersive virtual environments, may be to consider these chosen discourse/texts... (and for this text we now include 'art histories' (download-able from <http://www.thing.net/~grist/ld/fluxusworkbook.pdf>) – post analysis – as vectors – valuable points of reference.

That is to say 'quantities, having direction as well as magnitude, in determining the position of one point in space relative to another' here, intelligent and rigorous inclusion/exclusion of certain texts, aid our cognition/comprehension, of an overall system...

Their significance and value lies – not only in supplying meaning constructed via their validity, relevance, and binding to other chosen vectors, when applied to the potential of virtual systems/environments – but also as an aid in defining our 'place and our functional practice' within virtual systems and environments, it's agency, strategy and eventual operational effect...

Any overview of the Fluxus movement must take into account, the direct influence of John Cage's courses in experimental composition at the New School for Social Research (and his courses in Europe), the creative outcome of which, was not only committed to 'overcoming the gap between art and life', but appeared to be following a revolutionary path (laid by Duchamp + Dada) in bringing about (what Nietzsche called) a 'transvaluation of values'... and the volume 'An Anthology of Chance Operations' (download-able from <http://ubu.com/historical/young/index.html>)

'...Then we would be interested in art as something that changed us...

...And our changes, the changes in us, would be toward the broader use of our perceptions rather than toward the narrowing of our perceptions. So that instead of moving toward virtuosity, for instance, or elitism, or any of those things that require polishing, we would be moving towards the world that isn't art or hasn't been thought of as art, and turning it into art.'

John Cage

Interview on December 28, 1991

Edited from Art & Design Profile No 28: Fluxus Today and Yesterday '93

George Maciunas the founding member and leader of this radical/experimental art movement, Fluxus...

'Fluxus objectives are social (not aesthetic). They are connected to the LEF group of 1929 in the Soviet Union (ideologically)

(see <http://www.sovlit.com/lefprogram/>) and concerned with: gradual elimination of the fine arts (music, theater, poetry, fiction, painting, sculpture etc. etc.). this is motivated by desire to stop the waste of material and human resources... and divert it to socially constructive ends. Such as applied arts: industrial design, journalism, architecture, engineering, graphic-typographic arts, printing etc. They are all most closely related fields to fine arts and offer the best alternative profession to fine artists... Thus Fluxus is definitely against art object as non-functional commodity - to be sold and to make livelihood for an artist. It could temporarily have the pedagogical function of teaching people the needlessness of art, including the eventual needlessness of Fluxus itself. It should not be therefore permanent. (Incidentally one good way of teaching is by satirizing art and satirizing avant-garde art! or yourself!) You will notice this in the first V TRE newspaper... Fluxus therefore is ANTI-PROFESSIONAL (against professional art or artists making a livelihood from art, or artists spending their full time, their life, on art).

Secondly, Fluxus is against art as medium or vehicle promoting artist's ego, since applied art should express the objective problem to be solved, not artist's personality or his ego. Fluxus therefore should tend towards collective spirit, anonymity and ANTI-INDIVIDUALISM - also ANTI-EUROPEANISM (Europe being the place supporting most strongly - and even originating the idea of - professional artist, art-for-art ideology, expression of artist's ego through art etc. etc.)

These Fluxus concerts, publications etc are at best transitional (a few years) & temporary until such time when fine art can be totally eliminated (or at least its institutional forms) and artists find other employment.'

George Maciunas

Letter to Tomas Schmit January '64

'George's humor is self-referential, Brechtian. The awareness of every daily act we perform, of every daily object around us. And the critique of it all by means of humor. Pop Art took a look at the daily banality around us also. But it seemed to embrace it, to approve of it. Fluxus brought it into a critical awareness by means of humor. In that sense Fluxus is a political act.'

Jonas Mekas

IX. 15 (Mr Fluxus) undated.

'Shortly after his death George visited me in a dream. we were at the side of a pool. He held a bunch of white flowers and was handing them out to people. He gave me one. "Hello, Meiko," he said, "the smell of this flower fits in with the color of your dress, doesn't it?" But the flower didn't smell at all. A man in a formal suit began to play tuba on a ladder in the pool. George apologized, 'Sorry, I couldn't get a trombone.' The player said, 'George, that's OK, tuba would be nicer than trombone.' 'Ya, might be . . . ' George shrugged his shoulders, and went to bake pancakes . . . It was a funny dream, but very real.'

Mieko Shiomi

'Memories of George' manuscript, Osaka, June '93

'Nam June Paik states, 'In a nomadic, post-industrial time we are more experience-oriented than possession-oriented.'

John Latham who said, 'since the convergence of language and art within one frame of reference the public has been misled. Artists have responded during the 1960s and 70s through conceptualism and the dematerialisation of the art-object. The dilemma is resolved at present in art. A point has been made anterior to distinctions between art and language (science) to generate a form transposing the object-based idea into event, visually. Art is event-structure. Where language, government and money are dividing, the event-structured media are including.'

George Maciunas perceived clearly that the power of the new art could transform social and political practices directly, as he said in an interview with Peter Frank, few Fluxus artists made that a point in their work. Robert Filliou did, he formulated *The Principles of a Poetic Economy* saying, 'The ideal organisation of society would be to arrive at a happy solitude for every human being.' With his *Genial Republic* he wanted everybody to be his or her own territory so one would not have to appeal to any higher authority to make up one's mind about anything.

George Brecht made social transformation a point too, saying, 'Human solidarity is in its feeling the same for all, namely to combat the immense simplicity, sadness and lack of insight, and create a world in which spontaneity, joy, humour and a new form of higher wisdom bring real social prosperity with the same self-evidence as the green of my wife's eyes.'

Emmett Williams comments upon Brecht thus, 'George Brecht's events were for him very private, like little enlightenments he wanted to communicate with his friends, who would know what to do with them.'

Dick Higgin's approach was, 'Fluxus is inside you, is part of how you are. It is part of how you live.'

Joseph Beuys, in that line of thinking, called the *Social Sculpture* the only art work he really wanted to establish, knowing that all people alive are the content of a coherent culture. His slogan was 'Everybody is an artist.' He added, 'we are all as a person part of an ancient past. The theory of reincarnation is convinced about our repeated participation in the historical process. The individual therefore has to create itself anew into the current time frame.'

George Maciunas added that 'if a man could experience the world, the concrete world surrounding him, in the same way he experiences art, there would be no need for art, artists and similar non productive elements.'

For me, artists are the saints who show that from logic we now move to direct perception. Which means no more than to live on the level of the positive mind that is ever present before logic comes in. That lineage of artists dates back beyond Cezanne, but their quest grew stronger, especially with Fluxus.'

Louwrien Wijers

Fluxus Yesterday and Tomorrow

Edited from An Artist's Impression 26 January 1993

If as Ranci re implies, (within the logic revealed by surrealism) 'the ordinary becomes beautiful as a trace of the true' and the ordinary becomes beautiful as a trace of the true if it is torn from its obviousness...

In its own historical context, concept art, performance art, and works produced by Fluxus and its 'participants', surely constitutes instances of 'the tearing of life from its obviousness'... only for the 'truth of life' to become beautiful, within the social...

Whilst recognising we must always be able to integrate the concrete with the virtual, it is how the future use of virtual 'intermedia*' may play a role in the development of our 'place and our functional practice' – within virtual systems and environments, it's agency, strategy and eventual operational effect, – that we must look to...

And recognise that Fluxus, and its progenitors are valuable vectors, with their significance and value, still open to our scrutiny, research and interrogation... ignoring them would be cretinous, to continue our investigations – some thing more than truly edifying...

What better register, on which to (temporarily) conclude the initiation of an analysis of Fluxus/FutureFluxus, from the perspective of virtual practice than...

'Another way to look upon the relationship between Art, Science and Wisdom might be:

Science involves learning

Art unlearning and

Wisdom knowing

This does not mean that art and science are mutually exclusive, but that wisdom encompasses them both, which implies in turn that science and art alike need the voice of wisdom, and not the other way around. What can art and science contribute then? Well, a modern 'vocabulary' and techniques of integration for one, so that the language of wisdom - eternal truth - and the way of wisdom - peacefulness and harmony - can be re-understood and re-lived by all, regardless of race, sex, institutions or culture in this our world that has lost its bearings... '

Robert Filliou

*Edited from A letter on Art meets Science and Spirituality May 1987
from Art & Design Profile No 28: Fluxus Today and Yesterday '93*

**Dick Higgins, one of the founding members of Fluxus, first used the term intermedia in the early sixties.*

He was adamant about the innovative nature of the term. In a more recent interview, Higgins compares multimedia and intermedia: "To me the difference between intermedia and multimedia is that with intermedia there is a conceptual fusion, and you can't really separate out the different media in an integral way."

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