

The author discusses the development of Fluxus as a community of individuals who responded to complex, context-specific interactions among themselves, yet who persisted in their struggle against the codification of their activities into "artistic cohesion." Myths of periods of ideological unity and the hierarchy of status dependent upon participation in key Fluxus events are refuted while an attempt is made to provide an overview of consensus among scholars, curators and critics concerning core and peripheral membership in the Fluxus circle.

F L U X U S:

Global Community, Human Dimensions

Ken Friedman with James Lewes

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The Birth of a Community

As Fluxus enters its fourth decade, it has become the focus of far more attention than it received thirty years ago. When Dick Higgins and George Maciunas brought me into Fluxus in 1966, many of the people I met in the art world were mystified. "Fluxus is dead," they'd say with the certainty of people who thought they knew everything there was to know in the New York art world, which seemed to mean that they thought they knew everything there was to know between the sun and the outer moons of Jupiter. Being just a kid at the time, I didn't know what they were talking about, and that's just as well.

Fluxus had been born in Wiesbaden some four years before I arrived on the scene. It actually went back to the 1950s, when a series of meetings, friendships and relationships in different places on different continents began to bring a community of people into contact with each other. These people, in America, in Europe, in Japan, were eventually to form what is now known as Fluxus.

There are legends on top of legends surrounding Fluxus, some true, some half-true, some so ridiculous they could never have been true and some so good they ought to be true. I realized early on that everyone in Fluxus had a rather different vision of what Fluxus was or ought to be. I heard different stories explaining its origin, and different accounts of what it meant. There is some element of truth in many of the misinterpretations of Fluxus. George Maciunas did coin the name Fluxus, but he was not the founder of the Fluxus group, the community that came to use the name. He was the founder of a magazine named Fluxus that never appeared, and convenor of a festival that provided an occasion for the name to find its use. Maciunas may have tried to found a Fluxus group or a Fluxus Collective, but it never happened. Instead, he became a central and influential figure in the group that did. The real origins of Fluxus extend back into the 1950s, before Maciunas, and Fluxus endures after. As significant a figure as he was, Fluxus did not begin or end with George Maciunas.

As one of several founders, George Maciunas played a key role in shaping many of the Fluxus activities. So did Emmett Williams, George Brecht, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Nam June Paik and several others. So did several who were not at Wiesbaden, whose work helped to precipitate the 1962 festival tours, artists including La Monte Young, Jackson Mac Low, Yoko Ono and Robert Watts. Other artists had been working in experimental ways; people like Willem de Ridder, Henning Christiansen, Joseph Beuys and Ben Vautier. Still others began to enter Fluxus through contact with members of the burgeoning community; for example, Milan Knizak, Jeff Berner and me. The shape of Fluxus was defined by a variety of meetings and engagements. Geoffrey Hendricks had been on the scene since the mid-50s, but instead of joining John

Cage's class at the New School, he was busy getting an MA in art history at Columbia. Two other Columbia figures from that era, Bici Forbes Hendricks and Philip Corner, also became members of the classic Fluxus group. Some moved on, like Berner and Forbes Hendricks. Others came along. David Hompson and the Sharits brothers, Paul and Greg, got in touch from Indiana. Larry Miller worked with Robert Watts at Rutgers, and Jock Reynolds studied with him at the University of California. Things kept growing, and changing. The way Fluxus evolved has shaped the meaning that it holds. There's been a lot of talk about Fluxus over the years. If it's interesting to talk about Fluxus at all, it's interesting to talk about Fluxus in interesting ways.

Considering a Community

One of the most interesting ways to explore Fluxus is to consider its development as a community. Fluxus was a community. It began as communities do, in the migration and meeting of people. For nearly thirty years, discussions of Fluxus have been launched in the negative, descriptions of what Fluxus is not. That sort of analysis eventually leads nowhere. What Fluxus *isn't* is important, yet it is only important as the emptiness at the center of a cup is important to the cup's nature. It does not describe what the cup does. While Fluxus has been a floating "festival of misfits" for over three decades, that simple fact doesn't explain Fluxus' durability. It certainly fails to explain its achievements.

Partial Definitions

It is valuable to examine a number of the ways in which Fluxus has been defined. Each of these definitions has been partially accurate and somewhat inadequate. Fluxus has been seen as a "group, a forum, a movement, a school, a collective, a philosophy, a cooperative," and more. In part – and only in part – it has been all these things, resonating to the frequencies implied in each of these terms while fulfilling none of them completely. Aspects of each term denote aspects of the reality of Fluxus. None of them describes properly what Fluxus is.

As any community grows, Fluxus grew through the actions and interaction of the people who developed it. Unlike many communities that formalize into towns or nation-states, churches or universities, there was never a point at which the Fluxus community codified itself through a formal statement. One issue is a key to understanding the fluid, loose nature of the Fluxus community and its identity. Nearly everyone in and around Fluxus agrees on at least one thing: Fluxus will never have a specific and single definition. That may be considered the first clause in the unwritten Fluxus charter, an agreement to disagree.

Dismissing a Myth

Despite discussions of a "collective" or "euphoric" period in the evolution of Fluxus, there was never a time of ideological unity. The notion that a Fluxus manifesto once existed that a number of the artists signed is a myth. It has been supported by ambiguous evidence, artifacts that

have been misinterpreted as documents. The items in question are graphic artifacts created by George Maciunas. They bear statements that might – under appropriate circumstances – be read as manifestos. Some of the statements were even *proposed* as manifestos. No one ever signed them, not even Maciunas himself.

Several of the documents also present lists of names. It's a physical fact that the lists appear on the same artifacts as the statements. What the lists mean is another matter. At no time did the artists whose names appear in the lists sign the manifestos voiced in the statements. All of the artists with whom I have spoken are clear about this. Further, Maciunas seems never to have represented these artifacts as *signed* statements: their actual nature was ambiguous.

No original manifestos have been found bearing signatures because none existed. The notion that any Fluxus artist once agreed to these statements, later to change his or her mind, is based on the misguided assumption that the statement was signed in the first place. No evidence supports this assertion. To the contrary, there exists a large body of correspondence between artists and Maciunas and among the artists themselves that declares specific refusals to sign any of the proposed manifestos.¹

Different scholars offer a number of plausible conjectures regarding these graphic presentations and the lists of names that are associated with them. One suggestion is that Maciunas printed statements that he felt to be characteristic of Fluxus, including a number of proposed manifestos. To these he appended lists of the names of artists, composers and others whom he felt represented what he saw as the Fluxus position. If this is so, the conjunction of statements and names is innocent and circumstantial. Another hypothesis suggests that Maciunas put the statements forward as proposed manifestos together with the names of artists he hoped would come to sign them. This suggests wishful thinking or an active political campaign. A more recent suggestion is that Maciunas, familiar with Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideology, intended that it appear as if these manifestos had in fact been signed, even though they had not. In this view, the documents were a form of propaganda or agit-prop. The purpose of the exercise would have been to convince individuals that most of the others had already signed, and that they, too, should go with the tide of historical dialectic by acquiescing, retroactively, to having signed.

Some evidence exists for each view. I feel that the matter is best left open. Each of these three interpretations of the artifacts and their associated lists has merit. However, the conclusion supported by all three views – the notion of a Fluxus summoned into being by George Maciunas as an ideological, revolutionary cadre – is nonsense. Because this has been repeated so often, it bears refutation in any serious discussion of how the Fluxus community took shape. Fluxus was – and is – far richer and more interesting.

Definitions of Community

The best short definition of Fluxus is an elegant little manifesto published by Dick Higgins in the form of a rubber stamp:

Fluxus is not:

- a moment in history, or
- an art movement.

Fluxus is:

- a way of doing things,
- a tradition, and
- a way of life and death.

In these words, Higgins summarizes the ephemeral (that is, time-bound), transient (that is, transformational) and essentially human (that is, interactive) development of Fluxus. Defined by patterns of action and interaction, Fluxus grew organically through a number of periods in time.

Fluxus lacked the ideological and artistic cohesion to be characterized as an art movement. Even so, the ways that people worked with each other, and the traditions they developed created enough cohesion to make the term movement appropriate in other ways. Those ways became the reality of Fluxus. That reality gave Fluxus its living, durable qualities, qualities reflected in and developed through the lives of its members. Those qualities are well summarized by the term community. As defined in Webster's, the term illuminates several aspects of Fluxus:

community: 1: a: a unified body of individuals: as a: STATE, COMMON-WEALTH b: the people with common interests living in a particular area; broadly: the area itself <the problems of a large ~> c: an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in a common location d: a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society <a ~ of retired persons> e: a group linked by common policy f: a body of persons or nations having a common history, or common social, economic and political interests <the international ~> g: a body of persons of common and esp. professional interests scattered through a larger society <the academic ~> 2: society at large 3: a: joint ownership of participation <~ of goods> b: common character: LIKENESS <~ of interests> c: social activity: FELLOWSHIP d: a social state of condition.²

Fluxus is a community, much like any other. One can imagine Fluxus as a kind of town spread a little farther through space and time than most, the original global village.

Imagine a town, a community of people who see each other on a regular basis, some of whom also work together. In their lives together, they cooperate, they compete, they form friendships, antagonisms, loyalties and jealousies. Often the same people who work together on one project work against each other on the next. Two loyal friends who support each other on a personal level, fight vigorously on opposite sides of a political issue and yet remain fast friends. Political or business associates work together on specific projects yet dislike each other as individuals. Today's argument is tomorrow's joke. The myriad shifts of

thought, affection and commerce that define human interaction take place in time and space through a series of balances and shifts. That's Fluxus, if anything is.

This is true of other communities. It simply demonstrates the fact that the paradigm of community is valid here as elsewhere. One sees it in the priestly hierarchy of the Catholic church. One sees it in the lay body of the Lutherans. One sees it in cities and in towns. One sees it in universities.

There are both similarities and distinctions in Fluxus. We are a special community,³ as all communities are special at a specific level. Like a professional community (e.g., "the community of scholars, the intelligence community"), our community is international. Like a self-declared nation-state (Ireland, Norway or Zimbabwe) or an organization (Union Club, Red Cross or the International Chess federation), we convened ourselves, rather than being summoned into existence. Like many communities, we do not remain together for ideological or economic reasons, but for issues more complex that may perhaps touch on both. Like all communities that endure, Fluxus is cemented by "a way of doing things, a tradition, and a way of life and death."

Who Fluxus Is (or Was)

If one considers a circular field of members, with concentric rings moving outward from core involvement to participation on a less central basis, few dispute the fact that many people have been involved in Fluxus. However, the issue of key participation by central artists is a subject of dispute, and has been for years. For example, Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles are among the few whose activities extend from the pre-Fluxus period through the present day. Their engagement began in the 1950s during the Cage course. They were leading figures in pre-Fluxus activities long before Maciunas himself became involved. Their participation continues through *An Anthology*, the so-called collective period, the era of feuds and disputes, and on into the time after Maciunas' death. A curator, who defines Fluxus based on continued active participation, will thus see them as central figures. On the other hand, an individual who defines Fluxus predominantly in the light of Maciunas' projects and who measures importance by the number of Maciunas-produced multiples objects and editions, would weigh Robert Watts and George Brecht as the central figures. Conversely, a curator or historian who views a Fluxus based on philosophy, may well identify Robert Filliou, Ben Vautier or even Joseph Beuys as the key members. Questions of centrality, organizing principles and participation are important enough to have been the subject of many arguments and assertions, now and since the first days.

A Broad View of Fluxus

In 1981 or so, Peter Frank and I did a simple checklist analysis of the names of artists presented in the exhibitions, catalogues and books on Fluxus up to that time which Frank organized into a chart. James Lewes,

who as a graduate research assistant at Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts at The University of Iowa, is interested in Fluxus as a communicative environment, brought the chart forward in time.⁴

Fluxchart: An Overview of Assessments of the Fluxus Community

This chart is intended to provide an overview of consensus amongst a group of scholars, curators and critics concerning the core and periphery membership of Fluxus. To establish such a consensus, a number of sources including George Maciunas' Fluxlists (published between 1964 and 1974), Jon Hendricks' four volumes and nineteen exhibitions have been used. Each artist is marked with an ⊗ under the relevant entries, and by tracking the artists across different entries, one is able to view at a glance where the scholars/curators have located him/her with regard to the core or periphery of Fluxus.

The artists are listed alphabetically across the top of the chart and the exhibition catalogues and Fluxlists are listed numerically and in chronological order on the left-hand side.

—J.L.

Key to exhibitions, catalogues and Fluxlists:

- 1 Listed by George Maciunas as Fluxmembers (1966–1974).
- 2 *Happening & Fluxus* (1970). Exhibition at Kölnischer Kunstverein (Cologne), curated by Hans Sohm & Harold Szeemann.
- 3 *Fluxshoe* (1972). Traveling exhibition, (exhibited in Falmouth School of Art, Exeter University, Croydon, Museum of Modern Art Oxford, Cardiff, Nottingham, Blackburn & Hastings), curated by David Mayor.
- 4 *Fluxus International & Co* (1979). Exhibition at Elac (Nice) and Galerie d'Art Contemporain (Nice), curated by Gino Di Maggio & Ben Vautier.
- 5 *Fluxus the Most Radical and Experimental Art Movement of the 1960s* (1979) Harry Ruhé.
- 6 *Fluxus: Aspekte Eines Phänomens* (1981). Exhibition at Von der Heydt Museum (Wuppertal), curated by Ursula Peters.
- 7 Artists included by Jon Hendricks in *Fluxus Etc* (1981), *Fluxus Addenda I & Fluxus Addenda II* (both 1983) and *Fluxus Codex* (1988).
- 8 1962 *Wiesbaden Fluxus 1982* (1982) Exhibition at Harlekin Art (Wiesbaden), Museum Wiesbaden (Wiesbaden), & Neue Galerie der Staatliche (Kassel) curated by René Block.
- 9 *Fluxus 25 Years* (1987) Exhibition at Williams College Museum of Art (Williamstown, Massachusetts), curated by Dick Higgins.
- 10 *Fluxus and Friends: Selection From the Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts Collection* (1988). Exhibition at the University of Iowa Museum (Iowa City), curated by Estera Milman.
- 11 *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* (1988). Exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (New York), curated by Jon Hendricks and Clive Philpot.
- 12 *Fluxus & Happening* (1989) Exhibition at Galerie 1900–2000 & Galerie du Genie (Paris) curated by Charles Dreyfus.
- 13 *Fluxus & Co* (1989). Exhibition at Emily Harvey Gallery (New York), curated by Emily Harvey.
- 14 *Fluxus: Moment and Continuum* (1989). Exhibition at Stux Gallery (New York), curated by Vik Muniz.
- 15 *Fluxus SPQR* (1990). Exhibition Galleria Fontanella Borghese (Rome), curated by Alessandro Massi.
- 16 *Fluxus* (1990). Exhibition at Høvikodden Kunstsenter (Norway), curated by Ina Bloom.
- 17 *Fluxus Subjektiv* (1990). Exhibition at Galerie Krinzinger (Vienna), curated by Ursula Krinzinger, Milan Knizak, Peter Weibel, Brigitte Kowanz, Hermann Nitsch, Ben Vautier, Francesco Conz.
- 18 *Ubi Fluxus, Ibi Motus* (1990). Exhibition at the Venice Biennale, curated by Achille Bonito Oliva, Gino Di Maggio, Gianni Sassi.

19 *Fluxus Closing In* (1990). Exhibition at Salvatore Ala (New York), by Salvatore Ala and Caroline Martin.

20 *Pop Art* (1991–1992). Traveling exhibition (opened at Royal College of Art London), curated by Marco Livingstone & Thomas Kellein.

21 *Flux Attitudes* (1991–1992). Traveling exhibition (opened at HallWalls, Buffalo New York), curated by Susan Hapgood and Cornelia Lauf.

	Valdis Abolins	Genpei Akasegawa *	Dietrich Albrecht	Marcel Alocco	Gabor Altorjay	Eric Andersen	Carl Andre (Zaj)	Arman	John Armleder	Kuniharu Arizama	Robert Ashley	Michel Asso	Dana Atchley/Ace Space Company	Ayo	Lawrence Baldwin	Nanni Balestrini	Ramon Barce (Zaj)	Gianfranco Baruchello	Mary Bauermeister	Max Bense
1 G.M. List	x		x		x						x		x	x				x		
2 Happening &	x				x								x							
3 Fluxshoe	x		x	x	x	x						x	x				x			
4 International						x														
5 Most Radical	x	x	x		x								x				x			
6 Phenomens													x						x	
7 Hendricks	x		x		x				x				x						x	x
8 Weisbaten													x							
9 25 Years													x							
10 and Friends					x	x							x						x	
11 Silverman	x					x							x							
12 & Happening			x		x								x							
13 & Co.					x								x							
14 continuum								x												
15 SPQR						x							x							
16 1990	x	x			x								x							
17 Subjektiv					x								x							
18 UBI	x				x		x	x		x			x		x				x	
19 closing in	x				x								x							
20 Pop Art	x												x							
21 Attitudes	x				x								x							

*(Hi Red Center)

objective content analysis. This method is inconclusive, but it is not exclusive. Some names not on this list would nevertheless be considered central by many. A perfect example of this is Bengt af Klintberg, who in the mid 1960s withdrew from the art world to pursue his work as a folklorist. As a result, he vanished from Fluxus history until recent research began to highlight the significance of his early role.⁵ Another central figure, Jackson Mac Low, is also an example. As a poet, he produced far less visual work than others. As a result, he appears in only ten of the twenty-one exhibitions, placing him just below the cut-off point.

Styles of Participation

There are many ways in which scholars and curators view membership or participation in Fluxus. The ways in which the artists themselves view these issues are equally varied. Artists who became active in the pre-Fluxus era continue to be defined as Fluxus even when they themselves were somewhat diffident. This was the case with Jackson Mac Low and La Monte Young, who formally withdrew from Fluxus. It was also the case with Henry Flynt, who maintains a definite distance from Fluxus and

	Ugo Carrega	Carlheinz Caspari	Paula Castaldo	José Luis Castillejo (Zaj)	John Calvannaugh	Monte Cazzaza	Marc Chaimowitz	Giuseppe Chiari	John Chick	Henry Chopin	Henning Christensen	Christo	Grigori Chukra	Jack Cooke's Farmers Coop	Philip Corner	José Cortés (Zaj)	Manuel Cortés (Zaj)	Raimiro Cortés (Zaj)	Claudio Costa	Anthony Cox
1 G.M. List							⊗				⊗		⊗	⊗						⊗
2 Happening &	⊗		⊗	⊗				⊗		⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗						
3 Fluxshoe	⊗		⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗						⊗	⊗	⊗			
4 International							⊗													
5 Most Radical	⊗		⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗		⊗			⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗
6 Phanomens							⊗								⊗					
7 Hendricks	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					
8 Weisbaten										⊗						⊗				
9 25 Years								⊗							⊗					
10 and Friends			⊗		⊗			⊗					⊗							
11 Silverman								⊗			⊗									
12 & Happening							⊗	⊗							⊗					
13 & Co.															⊗					
14 continuum																				
15 SPQR							⊗	⊗												⊗
16 1990										⊗	⊗				⊗					
17 Subjektiv															⊗					
18 UBI							⊗				⊗				⊗					⊗
19 closing in							⊗								⊗					
20 Pop Art											⊗									
21 Attitudes							⊗								⊗					

of George Brecht, who asserts that "Fluxus has Fluxed." Brecht has declined to attend any Fluxus project, festival or activity for years, yet he is considered to be the central figure in any Fluxus retrospective, due in part to the unique stature of his *Water Yam* box and his event scores.

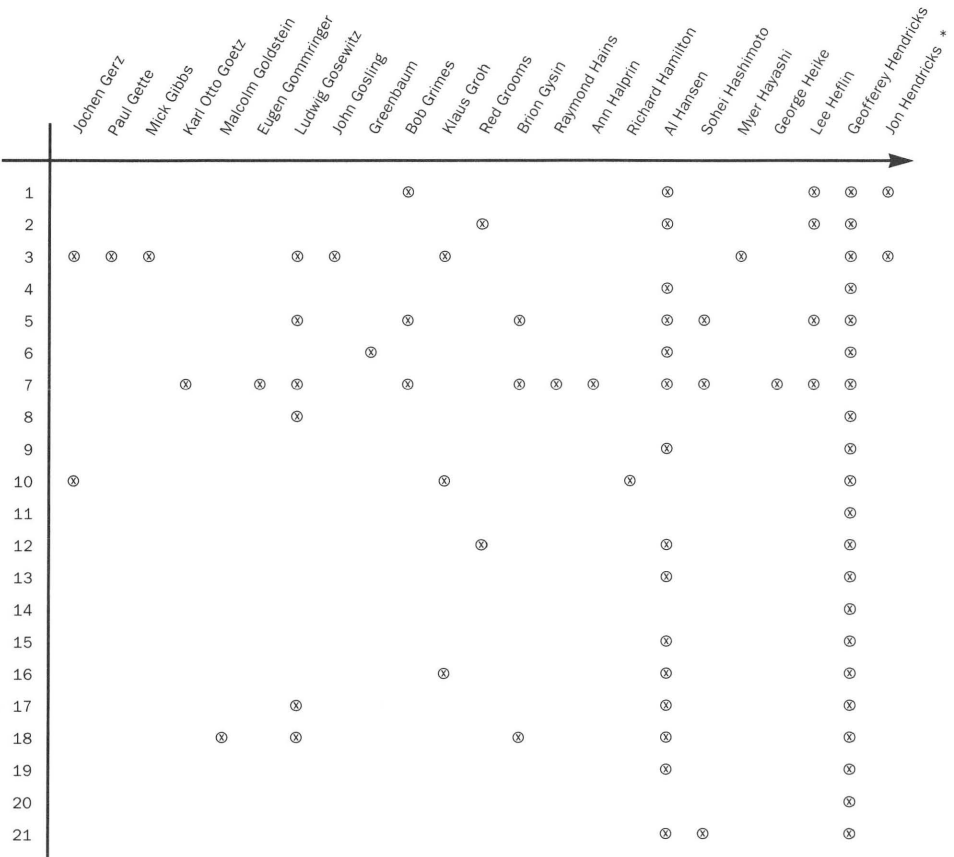
Artists who took part in one or more key events seem to regard each other as a special group within Fluxus, regardless of artistic or personal differences among themselves. The most important of these events was the first festival at Wiesbaden. To some, the participants in this festival are enshrined as central figures in the mythology of Fluxus. Mythology is a powerful force in defining any community. The Wiesbaden festival was important historically, but it has become even more important as a legend. Dick Higgins and others assert that "Fluxus is not a moment in history," yet despite Higgins' definition, the focus on Wiesbaden suggests that for some, Fluxus was a moment in history. It also suggests that participation in this brief moment is seen by some as more central to an artist's engagement in Fluxus than an enduring participation in Fluxus activities.⁶

Even though Fluxus is not a group in any formal sense, a claim to

	Kenjiro Ezaki	Owino Fahlström	Morton Feldman	Wolfgang Felsisch	Niel Felts	Esther Ferrer	Robert Filliou	Albert Fine	Henry Flynt	Bici Fordes	Simone Forti	Terry Fox	Jerry Foyster	Carolyn Foznick	Ken Friedman	Winifred Gaal	Bill Gaglione	Heinz Gappmayr	Tibor Gattyor	Karl Gerstner
1 G.M. List						⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					⊗						
2 Happening &						⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					⊗						
3 Fluxshoe				⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗			⊗					⊗			⊗	
4 International						⊗								⊗						
5 Most Radical						⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					⊗						
6 Phenomens						⊗								⊗						
7 Hendricks	⊗	⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗				⊗	
8 Weisbaten						⊗								⊗						
9 25 Years						⊗	⊗							⊗						
10 and Friends			⊗			⊗	⊗		⊗					⊗						
11 Silverman						⊗			⊗					⊗						
12 & Happening	⊗					⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					⊗						
13 & Co.							⊗	⊗						⊗						
14 continuum														⊗						
15 SPQR						⊗								⊗						
16 1990						⊗	⊗							⊗						
17 Subjektiv						⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					⊗						⊗
18 UBI	⊗			⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					⊗						
19 closing in						⊗	⊗	⊗						⊗						
20 Pop Art						⊗		⊗						⊗						
21 Attitudes						⊗		⊗						⊗						

group status and rank has been heavily invested in a specific group within Fluxus. While general Fluxus attitudes suggest that the Fluxus ideal values the spirit of experimentation and the method of philosophical inquiry over the domination of history, participation at Wiesbaden nevertheless defines a hierarchy of status. Anyone who took part in Wiesbaden has an automatic platform within the group, while everyone else must argue forcefully for their ideas or for their vision. Two contrasting examples will demonstrate the distinction.

Ben Vautier has been a central influence within Fluxus since the beginning. He has been active in publishing, in organizing concerts and in presenting exhibitions for three decades. His own work is considered by many to be typical Fluxus work. Even so, because he wasn't at Wiesbaden some of the Wiesbaden people look on Ben as a "late-comer." In contrast, consider the reborn, vigorous career of Ben Patterson, who withdrew from active participation on the art scene to pursue other career options. In the 1980s, he once again became active as an artist. Patterson had been one of the Wiesbaden participants, and his absence had left a niche in a small, select group, since,



*(Guerrilla Art Action Group)

were partially formalized. Others were totally informal, and yet quite strong and customary. In some circumstances, the customs accepted by one group of artists conflicted with the customs of another group. This defined some of the boundaries, collisions and rivalries of smaller communities within the Fluxus community.

Some of the different factions within Fluxus revolved around practices established by George Maciunas. The three rules governing the use of Fluxus work and the Fluxus name at concerts, exhibitions and publications is an example. According to Maciunas, one was permitted to use Fluxus material in concert provided that any work performed be identified as Fluxus work with credit to the artist and copyright acknowledgement to Fluxus. If fifty percent or more of the content of a performance, festival or concert was Fluxus work, the concert or festival must be identified as Fluxus. If less than fifty percent was Fluxus work, the concert could not be called Fluxus. Maciunas encouraged the extension of these rules to exhibitions and to publications.

Whether or not they were formally accepted, these "rules" became customary for most Fluxus artists. At the same time, Maciunas' demand that

	Joe Jones †	Hidzaku Yoshida	Marc Jourd'ha	Mauricio Kagel	Hans Kalkmann	Kantor	Allan Kaprow	Vaclav Kralik	Peter Kennedy	Helmut Kirchgaeßer	Per Kirkeby	Bengt af Klintberg	Jane Křizáková (Aktual)	Milan Křizáková (Aktual)	Alison Knowles	J. H. Koopman	Fumio Kozumi	Addi Koepecke	Takehisa Kosugi *	Jaroslav Kozlovski	Harry Kramer	Ruth Krauss	Philip Krumm
1	⊗						⊗			⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗					
2	⊗						⊗			⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗					
3	⊗			⊗					⊗				⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗					
4	⊗										⊗		⊗	⊗									
5	⊗							⊗		⊗			⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗					
6	⊗		⊗		⊗								⊗	⊗			⊗						
7	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗	
8	⊗												⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗					
9													⊗	⊗			⊗						
10													⊗	⊗									
11	⊗								⊗				⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗					
12	⊗					⊗							⊗	⊗			⊗						
13	⊗												⊗	⊗									
14													⊗	⊗									
15	⊗												⊗	⊗									
16									⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗				
17	⊗												⊗	⊗									
18	⊗					⊗							⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗					
19	⊗									⊗			⊗	⊗									
20	⊗					⊗				⊗			⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗					
21	⊗									⊗			⊗	⊗									

†(The Tone Deaf Music Company)

* (The Taj Mahal Travellers)

facing page. Joseph Beuys and Ken Friedman, *Fluxus Zone West*, Fluxus West. Collaborative stamp project, three rubber stamps made in Rome, Georgia cased in blue linen-like box, 13.3 x 21.6 x 19.7 cm., n.d., and Joseph Beuys, *Postcard by Joseph Beuys*. Postcard, *Fluxus Zone West* stamp by Joseph Beuys, *Fluxus West* stamp by Ken Friedman, 11.4 x 14.9 cm., n.d. Madison Art Center, Gift of Emily Harvey and Christian Xatrec. Photograph by Angela Webster.

	Shigeo Kubota *	Tetsumi Kudo	Jean Clarence Lambert	George Landow	Vytautas Landsbergis	Dan Laurfer	Jean Jacques Lebel	John Lennon	Bob Lens	Patrice Lerocherevill	Joan Leskin	Manfred Leve	Frederic Lieberman	Györgyi Ligeti	Elke Linker-Lucas	Carla Liss	Zofra Lissa	Anne Lockwood	Danièle Lombardi	Anne Lovell
1 G.M. List	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗					⊗	⊗		⊗					
2 Happening &	⊗		⊗		⊗	⊗							⊗		⊗					
3 Fluxshoe			⊗				⊗							⊗	⊗		⊗			⊗
4 International					⊗															
5 Most Radical	⊗		⊗		⊗		⊗	⊗				⊗	⊗		⊗					
6 Phenomems																				
7 Hendricks	⊗		⊗				⊗			⊗	⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗				
8 Weisbaten																				
9 25 Years															⊗					
10 and Friends	⊗																			
11 Silverman	⊗						⊗								⊗					
12 & Happening	⊗	⊗				⊗									⊗					
13 & Co.									⊗											
14 continuum																				
15 SPQR																				
16 1990	⊗												⊗							
17 Subjektiv																				
18 UBI	⊗					⊗												⊗		
19 closing in	⊗					⊗														
20 Pop Art	⊗																			
21 Attitudes	⊗												⊗							

* (Hi Red Center)

all work by every artist associated with Fluxus be published, copyrighted and administered by Fluxus was acceptable to no one. The concept foundered first on the fact that Maciunas was simply unable to handle the publishing load for as much work as the Fluxus artists and composers could produce. But finally, his demand for control and conformity on artistic and political issues became even more of a stumbling block.⁸

Copyrights and the anti-copyright Fluxmark were further issues. The custom of Fluxus people acknowledging each others' work was a common habit. Even so, most people maintained their own copyright. Certain works were copyrighted by Fluxus when they were published by Fluxus. In 1966, Maciunas authorized Ben Vautier, Milan Knížák, Per Kirkeby and me to grant permissions and rights and to supervise royalties on behalf of Fluxus. What this has meant in practice is the right to encourage and grant permission, which I've been doing for twenty-five years.

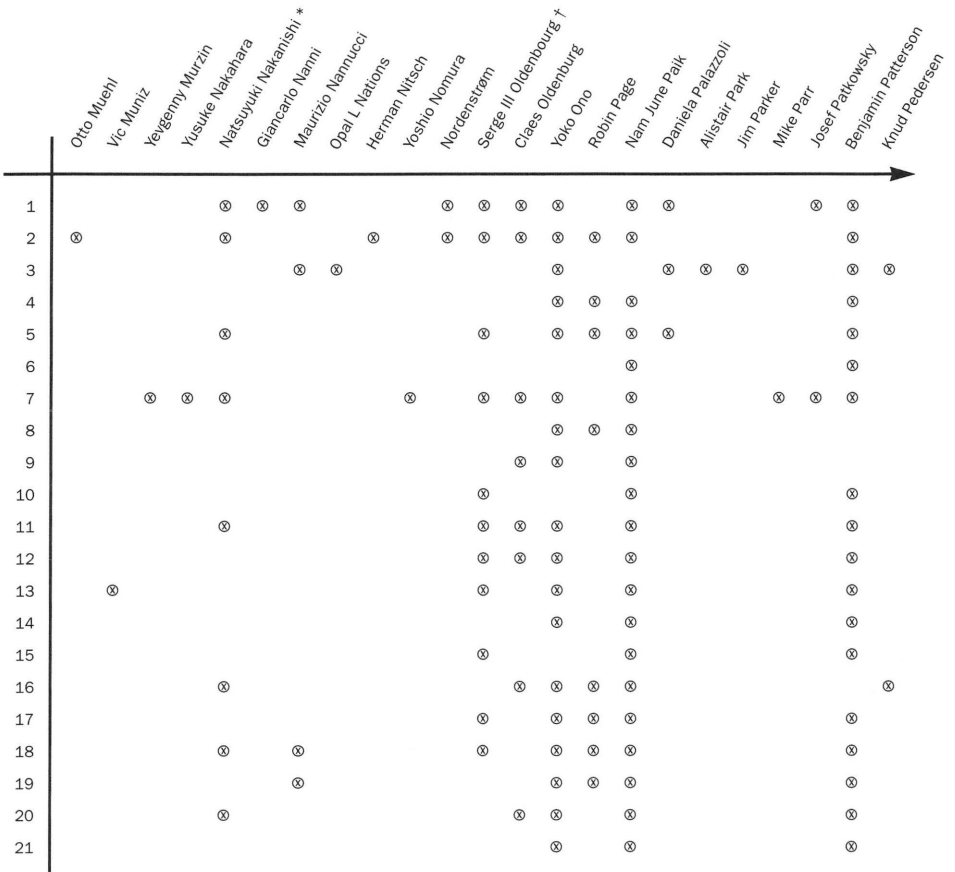
The anti-copyright Fluxmark registration is even more interesting. In 1972, David Mayor, associate director of Fluxus West in England, director of the Fluxshoe, and co-publisher of Beau Geste Press, invented the

	Lydia Mercedes	Pierre Mercure	Gustav Metzger	Heinz Klaus Metzger	Tommy Mew	Dick Miller	Larry Miller	Kate Millert	Uncle Don Milliken	Jean Claude Moineau	Franz Mon	Manfred Monthwe	Barbara Moore	Peter Moore	Charlotta Moorman	Shiryu Morita	Robert Morris	Simone Morris	Davide Mosconi	Olivier Mosset *	
1 G.M. List	⊗					⊗	⊗					⊗	⊗			⊗				⊗	
2 Happening &								⊗					⊗								⊗
3 Fluxshoe					⊗				⊗												
4 International																					
5 Most Radical	⊗						⊗		⊗				⊗	⊗							⊗
6 Phenomens																					
7 Hendricks	⊗	⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗				⊗
8 Weisbaten																					
9 25 Years													⊗								
10 and Friends			⊗						⊗												⊗
11 Silverman						⊗	⊗						⊗								
12 & Happening						⊗								⊗							
13 & Co.						⊗								⊗							
14 continuum						⊗								⊗							
15 SPQR														⊗							
16 1990						⊗															
17 Subjektiv						⊗								⊗							
18 UBI		⊗				⊗							⊗	⊗					⊗		
19 closing in						⊗							⊗	⊗							
20 Pop Art																					
21 Attitudes						⊗							⊗								

*(Total Art Nice)

anti-copyright mark. The mark was an X in a circle, a hybrid form based on the marriage of the copyright circle and the Fluxus West X. The mark meant that anyone was free to use or to reproduce the marked material. It was a fascinating idea, but it never caught on, though the liberties taken with copyrighted Fluxus material suggest that in practice the Mayor anti-copyright philosophy is more powerful than Maciunas' rules. Or, perhaps it is just that no one knows how to enforce our copyright.

Festivals, concerts, performances, publications and exhibitions have been the most common forms of Fluxus community interaction. A body of practices has emerged, ranging from several forms of performance style to the way programs are selected. These practices differ among groups within Fluxus. There are other customs that characterize the Fluxus community. Some are public, or become public as performance practices do. Others are private, shared experiences among friends, like the dinners and food events that have been a tradition in Fluxus since the beginning. These become a medium of exchange and development. Some become the basis of the paradigms, models and algo-



*(Hi Red Center)

†(Total Art Nice)

	Takako Saito	Ed Sanders	Mario Schifano	Wim T. Schippers	Tomas Schmit	Dieter Schobel	Carolee Schneemann	Fritz Schwegler	Kurt Schwertzik	Sara Seagull	Greg Sharits	Paul Sharits	Bob Sheff	Mieko (Chieko) Shioml	Takanishi Shohachiro	Siclier	Gian-Emilio Simonetti	Don Smithers	Kurt Sondburg	Daniel Sperry	Klaus Staek	Lewis Stein	William Stone
1	⊗		⊗	⊗		⊗				⊗	⊗		⊗		⊗					⊗			
2	⊗			⊗		⊗					⊗	⊗	⊗								⊗		
3	⊗					⊗					⊗		⊗	⊗									
4	⊗			⊗													⊗				⊗		
5	⊗		⊗	⊗		⊗				⊗	⊗		⊗			⊗					⊗		
6	⊗			⊗									⊗			⊗					⊗		
7	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		
8	⊗			⊗									⊗								⊗		
9	⊗			⊗																	⊗		
10	⊗						⊗			⊗			⊗								⊗	⊗	
11	⊗			⊗									⊗								⊗		
12	⊗					⊗					⊗										⊗		
13	⊗					⊗																⊗	⊗
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17	⊗			⊗		⊗					⊗		⊗								⊗		
18	⊗	⊗		⊗		⊗							⊗			⊗					⊗		
19	⊗			⊗		⊗							⊗								⊗		
20	⊗			⊗									⊗								⊗		
21	⊗					⊗					⊗		⊗								⊗		

	Demetrio Stratos	Jacques Strauch-Barelli	Kumi Sugai	Gregory Szeigart	Tamas Szemlyóby	Yoji Takahashi	Jiro Takamatsu *	Anne Tardos	Bill Tarr	Howard Temple	James Tenney	Andre Thomkins	Jean Tinguley	Jean Toche †	Yoshiaki Tona	Yasunao Tone	Roland Topor	Erndre Töt	Frank Trowbridge	Fred Truck
1 G.M. List						⊗									⊗					
2 Happening &						⊗														
3 Fluxshoe													⊗					⊗		
4 International																				
5 Most Radical				⊗		⊗									⊗	⊗				
6 Phanomens											⊗									
7 Hendricks		⊗			⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗			⊗	
8 Weisbaten																				
9 25 Years															⊗					
10 and Friends			⊗								⊗							⊗		⊗
11 Silverman															⊗					
12 & Happening																				
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14 continuum																				
15 SPQR																				
16 1990		⊗														⊗		⊗		
17 Subjektiv																				
18 UBI	⊗						⊗			⊗		⊗			⊗					
19 closing in															⊗					
20 Pop Art						⊗														
21 Attitudes																⊗				

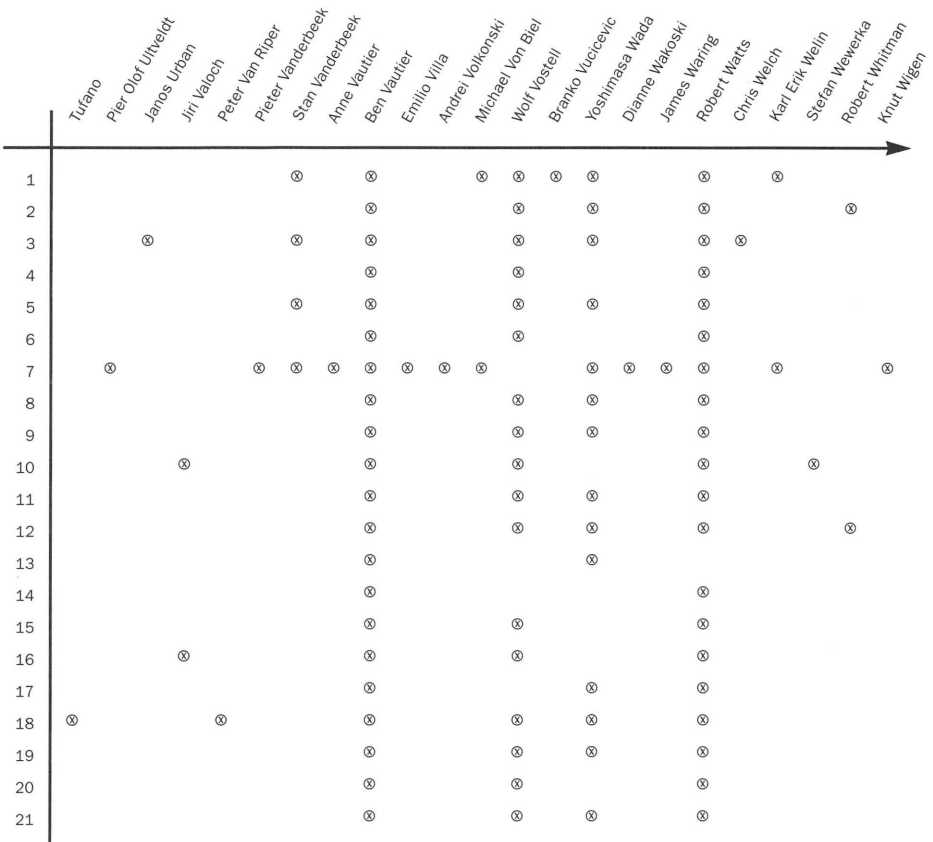
*[Hi Red Center]

†[Guerilla Art Action Group]

a prayer or a grace. Later, I arranged a meeting between Jean Brown and George Maciunas. I knew they'd hit it off, but I never knew how well. It seemed entirely appropriate to me that Maciunas found his way to Brown's corner of the world, heartland of the Shaker expansion.

The Shakers were among the first great utilitarian utopians of the modern era. They were a religious community, to be sure, but their religion was a religion of service. They established some of the first mass production industries in the world, selling objects and artifacts through catalogues and by mail order. Their furniture, so superb in design, so perfect in balance, was the first example of industrial design and ergonomic sensibility in the furniture trade. They supplied America's farms and gardens with top quality seed.

A seed house was a building where seeds were sorted and packaged. The packages could be ordered individually by catalogue or mail order. There were also seed kits with an assortment of packages in a tidy box not too different in shape or size from the Fluxkits of the 1960s. Like the Fluxkits, only a few of these remain. It is an interesting coincidence that the most complete extant seed kit is to be found in the



museum of the old Shaker Village a few minutes' drive from Hanover, New Hampshire, where the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College houses a Fluxus collection established in honor of George Maciunas.⁹

Fluxus people other than Maciunas have not been celibate and abstemious, which the Shakers – like Maciunas – famously were. In other regards, there were delightful similarities. The union of work and life, an art and a music which were not separate from life, a sense of industry combined with a light spirit were the characteristics that seem to me to be central to the Shaker community. These qualities typify what is best in the Fluxus community as well.

It may be only my interpretation, but it seems to me no coincidence that America's first great Fluxus collection was established in a Shaker Seed House.¹⁰

	Jean-Pierre Wilhelm	Emmert Williams	La Monte Young	George Yuasa	Zanok	Vyacheslav Zavalishin	Marian Zazeela
1 G.M. List	⊗	⊗	⊗				
2 Happening &		⊗	⊗				
3 Fluxshoe							
4 International		⊗					
5 Most Radical	⊗	⊗	⊗				
6 Phenomens		⊗	⊗				
7 Hendricks	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
8 Weisbaten		⊗	⊗				
9 25 Years		⊗	⊗				
10 and Friends							
11 Silverman		⊗	⊗				
12 & Happening		⊗	⊗				⊗
13 & Co.			⊗				⊗
14 continuum							
15 SPQR		⊗					
16 1990		⊗	⊗				
17 Subjektiv		⊗	⊗				
18 UBI		⊗	⊗				⊗
19 closing in		⊗	⊗				⊗
20 Pop Art		⊗	⊗				
21 Attitudes		⊗	⊗				

NOTES

- ¹ Many of these letters can be read at Archiv Sohm in Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, at the Jean Brown Archive in the Getty Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, and in other major collections of Fluxus correspondence.
- ² *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, (Springfield: 1990).
- ³ Fluxus has been looked at in many ways, but some of the most interesting and obvious have been overlooked. It had never been examined as a population or a community. This essay is the view of one member of the Fluxus community. The issues are quite real, but the considerations and interpretations are my own.
- ⁴ In 1991, James Lewes began his expansive *Fluxus Concordance*, a cross-referenced chronology with biographies and bibliographies on Fluxus and the artists of the Fluxus community.
- ⁵ Af Klintberg is a poet and writer who created many delightful event structures and scores in the early 1960s. Despite the importance of his performable ideas, he produced little *exhibitible* or *salable art*. By the late 1960s, he was no longer active on the scene. Ken Friedman, "The Case for Bengt af Klintberg," in *Fluxus in Scandinavia*, a lecture for the Royal Academy of Art, Copenhagen, February 1992.
- ⁶ Some of the Wiesbaden participants have had relatively little to do with Fluxus since the early 60s, except when they have been invited to take part in exhibitions and festivals. Even so, they have been given far greater attention than an artist such as Larry Miller, who worked closely with George Maciunas and Robert Watts from the late 1960s. Miller has been an active custodian of the Fluxus heritage, yet while many discussions of Fluxus stress the communal spirit, little emphasis has been placed on Miller's contribution to that spirit, despite the fact that Miller has now been active in Fluxus for more years than Maciunas was at the time of his death. Maciunas' influence on the Fluxus community was profound and central, but he served his own, unique vision of Fluxus, a Fluxus that was, at times, political, even eschatological. In contrast, Miller's presence has been much more low-key, yet far more communitarian in spirit.
- ⁷ It should be noted that Patterson is a quintessential Fluxus artist in many important ways. His work captures the astonishing, enchanted humor of Fluxus perfectly with performance at the border of objects and objects that establish a theatrical presence. In every human community, physical meetings and friendships are more important than intellectual or artistic issues. For many, an absence of twenty years was little different than working with an artist like Mieko Shiomi, who had been physically distant in Japan. Patterson, had once been an immediate and close part of the community in a way that Shiomi never had. For many, Patterson's return was much homier and less exotic in feeling than Shiomi's infrequent visits – despite the fact that Shiomi had been more continuously active in Fluxus while Patterson's career had taken a dramatic detour.
- ⁸ The question of forbidding performances or publications is essentially moot. It was already moot when Maciunas once or twice tried to forbid things back in the early 1960s. There is today no conceivable reason to do so, though there may be if the question of royalties becomes more significant. Even so, as long as all four of us remain alive, any one of us has unilateral right to grant permission even though the others may refuse. My sense of things has been to encourage people to follow the three rules.
- ⁹ When George Maciunas died on May 9, 1978, a number of his friends established a collection of Fluxus and Fluxus-related art in his honor at Dartmouth. In November, 1979, an exhibition entitled, *A Tribute to George Maciunas*, opened at the College's Beaumont-May Gallery. Many of the works from that show are included in the current exhibition, *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country*.
- ¹⁰ Many of the materials collected by Jean Brown are currently housed at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, in Santa Monica.

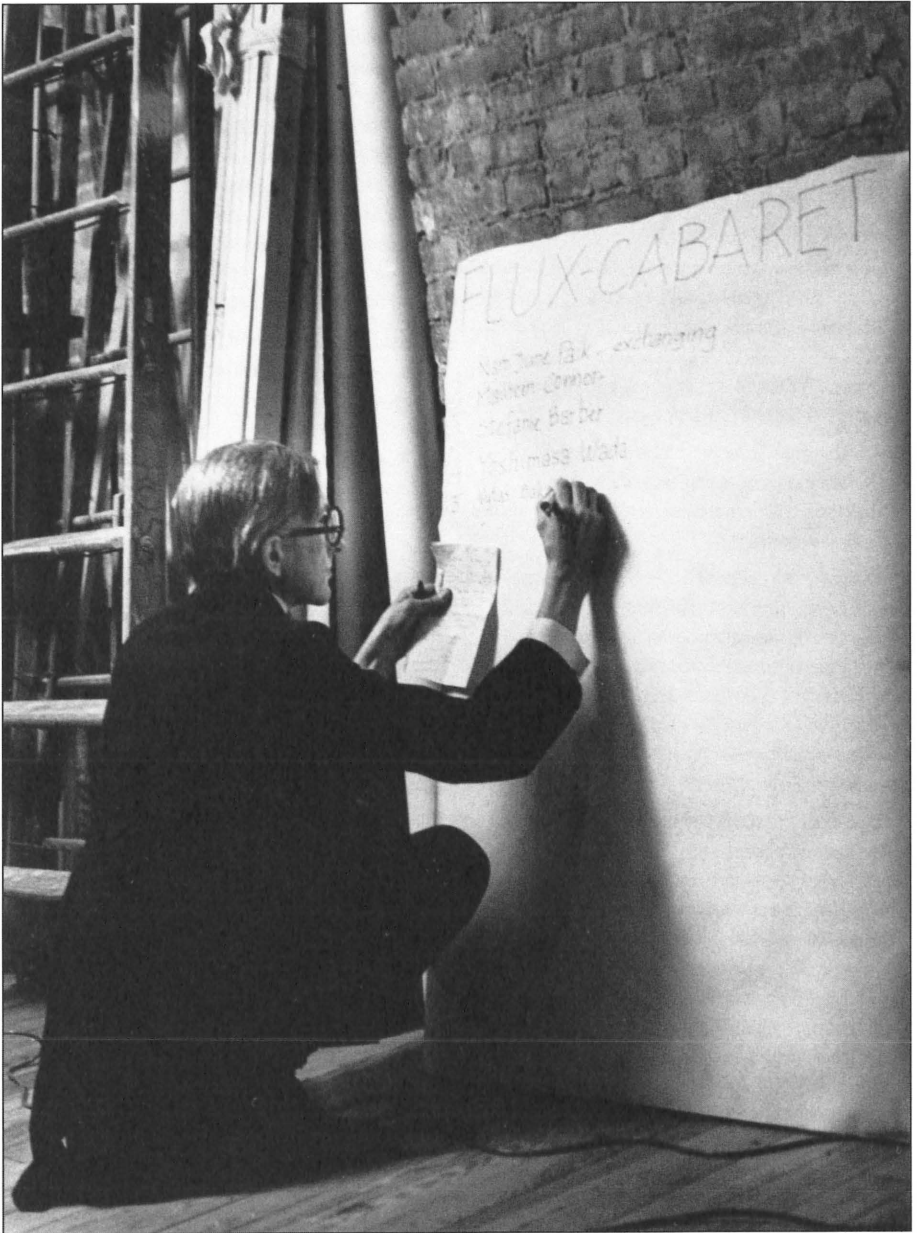


figure 1. Flux Cabaret, George Maciunas, Feb. 25, 1978.
Photograph by Hollis Melton.