

ABSTRACT

The Spirit of Fluxus as a Nomadic Art Movement

Fluxus was the brain-child of a Lithuanian-born artist named George Maciunas whose family fled to Germany in the Second World War, where they eventually became displaced persons and later emigrated to the USA. Maciunas studied art and architecture in Pittsburgh and New York before working as an architect and graphic artist and founded the Fluxus movement at the beginning of the 1960s.

During his student years, he became fascinated by nomadic art in Asia and Eastern Europe that would later influence his life's work. This essay considers the relationship between his interest in nomadism and the nature of the Fluxus movement that spread across the world, breaking down barriers between art and life, privileging concrete and conceptual art, and staging unusual events. It applies Braidotti's notion of the nomadic subject to Maciunas' encouragement of radical styles of performance art, such as Yoko Ono's minimalist conceptual work and Joseph Beuys's Tatar-influenced use of fat and felt.

Keywords: Maciunas, Fluxus, nomadism, Braidotti, Deleuze, Ono, Beuys.

BIOGRAPHY

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BRAIDOTTI'S NOMADISM

In her book *Nomadic Subjects* (2nd Edition, 2011), Rosi Braidotti outlines different features of nomadism with which she identifies. In this essay I want to apply some of her ideas to Fluxus, an art movement that emerged in the 1960s and which still continues to function today. By presenting several ways that Braidotti conceives the nomad and by relating these to Fluxus, I plan to introduce various aspects of the nomadic subject and indicate how these can be applied to theatre and performance.

In *Nomadic Subjects*, Braidotti discusses various facets of her life that she regards as nomadic:

1. Geographic movement,
2. Transnational identities,
3. Promoting common space,
4. Polylingualism,
5. Desubjectivation,
6. Becoming Minoritarian,
7. Thinking and acting differently.

First of all, geographically, she has moved from one country to another: born in Italy, raised in Australia, educated in France, and now based in the Netherlands. Secondly, as a person who has moved from one nation-state to another, she maintains no fixed sense of national identity and this has led to her "active resistance against methodological nationalism and a critique of Eurocentrism".¹ Heavily indebted to her mentor Gilles Deleuze and his notion of the nomad as a revolutionary figure in society,² she opposes the state apparatus, identifying more with

the stateless, the immigrant and the migrant rather than with those of fixed nationality. While the nation-state reinforces geographical borders and divisions and subjugates its citizens, the nomad subverts these functions of the state.

Thirdly, she subscribes to the Deleuzian differentiation between the divisible earth (in other words, private property) and nomadic space, which belongs to everyone. Thus, as a self-styled nomad, Braidotti promotes the notion of common space rather than private property. Fourth, as someone who has adopted new languages as she has moved from one country to another, she has been linguistically nomadic, writing in different languages and translating her own work: "My work as a thinker, has no mother tongue, only a succession of translations, of displacements, of adaptations to changing conditions."³ Fifth, in common with other poststructuralist thinkers such as Luce Irigaray and Deleuze, she regards personal identity as something that is continually emerging rather than being fixed and static and, like them, views the subject "as an entity fully immersed in processes of becoming, in productive relations of power, knowledge and desire".⁴ Sixth, as a feminist and lesbian, she considers her lifestyle choices as minoritarian. As opposed to male, heterosexual majoritarian identity, she advocates the notion of becoming other, as well as the concept of "yearning", which the black feminist writer bell hooks defines as "an affective and political sensibility that cuts across the boundaries of race, class, gender, and sexual practice [that] could be fertile ground for the construction of empathy – a base

for solidarity and coalition”.⁵ Seventh, and perhaps most importantly, she regards her work as conceptually nomadic, as that of thinking differently: “This entails the creation of new frameworks, images and modes of thought, beyond the dualistic conceptual constraints and the perversely monological mental habits of phallogocentric thought.”⁶

GEORGE MACIUNAS AND THE FOUNDING OF FLUXUS

Having established some of the ways in which Braidotti conceives herself as nomadic, I now want to turn to Fluxus and discuss its status as a nomadic art movement by applying these features to their work. However, I first want to give some background and basic information about Fluxus. It was the brain-child of a Lithuanian-born artist named George Maciunas. When he was a child, his family fled to Germany in the 1940s when Lithuania was occupied and lived as displaced persons in Germany for a few years after the war before settling in the USA. Maciunas studied art and architecture in New York and Pittsburgh before becoming an architect and graphic designer. As a student he was clearly impressed by nomadic art works, taking copious notes on nomadic art in Eastern Europe and Asia as well as on European mythology. In 1960 he associated with artists interested in the radical forms of new music while attending music classes at the New School for Social Research taught by Richard Maxwell, a former student of John Cage.⁷

At the end of 1960, Maciunas leased an art gallery at a prestigious venue on Madison Avenue and 73rd Street in Manhattan. With his mother as receptionist and secretary and using the name Fluxus for the first time, Maciunas exhibited the early work of Yoko Ono as well as that of experimental music composers such as John Cage, La Monte Young, Jackson Mac Low and Dick Higgins. Unfortunately, he ran out of money after only six months and had to declare the gallery bankrupt. During the following year, Maciunas escaped his creditors by taking a job as an architect and graphic designer at a United States Air Force base in Wiesbaden, where he organised the first major international Fluxus event in September 1962 with concerts held over several

weekends by a number of artists including himself. Many of the performances seemed silly or absurd to the audiences, such as Maciunas’ aleatoric use of technology in *In Memoriam to Adriano Olivetti*, in which the performers reacted to the numbers arbitrarily produced by an adding machine. “During performances of this piece, the musicians have to read the numbers and respond to them in time to a metronome, with prescribed reactions, usually raising and lowering a bowler hat.”⁸ The press reactions to the initial Wiesbaden event, including a TV feature, were generally hostile, gleefully quoting the graffiti plastered on one of their posters that “the lunatics have escaped”.⁹

To make matters worse, some of the composers of electronic music, who performed in the first concert, abandoned the festival after disagreeing with the artistic aims of Maciunas and other artists.¹⁰ More Fluxus concerts followed in quick succession in 1962 and 1963 in Copenhagen, London, Paris, Dusseldorf, Amsterdam, Nice, and later in Prague, Warsaw, and Vilnius. Maciunas moved back to New York, which became its centre of activities, from where he tried to provide performance as well as publishing opportunities for a variety of artists.

Maciunas promoted the idea that Fluxus should undermine the commercial value placed on art and produce random, cheap, ephemeral, and frequently comical art works and events. He proposed breaking down the barrier between arts forms and between art and life, and he declared that “everyone is an artist”.¹¹ Maciunas did not like abstract art and instead encouraged concrete art. Differentiating between the two, he wrote: “Now in Music let’s say if you have [an] orchestra play, that’s abstract because the sounds are all done artificially by musical instruments. But if that orchestra is trying to imitate a storm say, like Debussy, or Ravel does it, that’s illusionistic now. It’s still not realistic. But if you’re going to use noises like the clapping of the audience or farting or whatever, now that’s concrete.”¹² Julie Henault further explains the notion of concrete art as follows: “Why paint a tomato? Just take the tomato and leave as it is! Concretism comes from life itself, without any modifications.”¹³

Although based in New York, the outreach of Fluxus was international, staging events all over

Europe and Japan and attracting artists from many countries to their ranks such as Joseph Beuys, Nam June Paik, Yoko Ono, Ben Vautier and Vytautas Landsbergis (who later would lead the movement for Lithuanian independence in the 1980s). With the proliferation of activities, Maciunas designated four regional headquarters for Fluxus in California, France, Denmark and Czechoslovakia. According to Ken Friedman, who led Fluxus West (based in California), the twelve main characteristics of Fluxus were: Globalism, Unity of Art and Life, Intermedia, Experimentalism, Chance, Playfulness, Simplicity, Implicativeness, Exemplarism, Specificity, Presence in Time, and Musicality.¹⁴

Maciunas maintained a database of the artists associated with the movement and created an elaborate chart to indicate the influences on these individual artists. Amongst those that Maciunas identified as creative influences on Fluxus were the Dadaists, Marcel Duchamp, John Cage, and the Happenings of Allan Kaprow. Like the Dadaists, Fluxus adopted an anti-bourgeois aesthetic and the idea of nonsensical and absurd artworks. Like Duchamp, Fluxus used the notion of the readymade, or found objects that were given an artistic value. Like John Cage, who was loosely associated with the Fluxus movement and who used the *I Ching* to determine the sequence in some of his own pieces, Fluxus applied a radical approach that featured prepared pianos and other altered musical instruments as well as aleatoric methods (i.e., performances determined by chance such as Maciunas’ *In Memoriam to Adriano Olivetti*). And, like the Happenings by Allan Kaprow and others that were taking place contemporaneously, Fluxus created surprising interventions in galleries, concert halls, and public spaces in which the audience often became participants. However, Maciunas differentiated Fluxus events from Happenings, calling Happenings “neo-Wagnerian operas” compared to the quick and immediate Fluxus events.¹⁵

As Fluxus developed over the years, the events moved further away from the format of music concerts towards all kinds of performances, installations, performance art, experimental video and film as well as the unconventional packaging and distribution of artworks. Maciunas also worked closely with a fellow Lithuanian, Jonas Mekas, providing

the graphics for Mekas’s film magazine *Film Culture* and later collaborated on performances with Mekas at the Film-Makers’ Cooperative (where they encouraged Andy Warhol to make films) and Film-Makers’ Cinemathèque. Although Mekas was an experimental film-maker, Maciunas was even more radical in his use of film technology, such as taping images onto the celluloid to experiment with a new intermedial form in his film *Artype* (1966).¹⁶

Amongst many other events, Maciunas organised a flux-mass in the university chapel at Rutgers University. The *Flux-mass* in 1970 was a memorable performance that displayed Maciunas’ originality, sense of humour and novel uses of technology. Geoff Hendricks, who taught in the art department at Douglass College in Rutgers University, describes how Maciunas “researched the Catholic Mass, studied its structure and traditions, carefully examined all the parts and developed humorous interpretations for each. The priest’s assistants wore gorilla costumes, and the front of the priest’s vestments varied from images of Napoleon to the Venus de Milo to George Washington... The sacramental wine was in a plasma tank with hose. Wafers were laxative and blue-urine cookies. The consecration of the bread, a giant loaf filled with sawdust, was done by a mechanical dove (Holy Spirit) made by Joe Jones which moved across overhead on a wire and dropped mud from a can onto the loaf... An inflated Superman filled with wine was ‘bled’.”¹⁷ One of the participants explained George Maciunas’s aims as “not just a joke but as a critical forum with deep irreverence for the given order”.¹⁸ While the audience was amused, the church authorities were not and “the chapel required an official reconsecration due to the protests of sacrilege”.¹⁹

Maciunas brought to Fluxus a somewhat totalitarian approach, attempting on various occasions to purify the movement of extraneous influences or wayward personalities.²⁰ He wrote, “such [a] front must constantly be purged of saboteurs & ‘deviationists’ just like the communist party. Communists would have long split into 1000 parts if they did not carry out the strict purges. It was the purge or FLUX that kept them united & monolithic.”²¹ Emmet Williams, who was expelled by Maciunas from Fluxus, complained that Maciunas was trying

to link Fluxus with the communist party, against the wishes of other members of Fluxus. He commented, "George, high-born friend of the proletariat, had a despotic way of silencing the opposition – the sacrament of excommunication, followed by public denunciation – which he administered with a free hand when critics and 'renegades' within the Fluxus family, challenged his authority. There were so many purges, through the years, that most of us were in effect outsiders looking in, a situation that in general provoked more laughter than tears."²² Impressed by the action of the white guards at the time of the Soviet revolution to destroy artworks, Maciunas also proposed actions of sabotage against museums, galleries and theatres, and organised a picket of a concert by Stockhausen in New York in 1964, though he found little support for such activities amongst his associates.²³

Thus, although it was such a revolutionary movement that some of its affiliates called it a non-movement,²⁴ Fluxus was clearly led but only partially controlled by Maciunas. As the other artists were all radical in their practice and unwilling to be moulded into a single way of doing things, Maciunas appeared like a herder of cats rather than sheep. Much to his chagrin, his associates could easily desert him and perform in rival events or publish their work in alternative publications. While always working for what he considered to be the good of the group, he was unable to provide a coherent programme or means of support or maintain a consistent set of artists. According to Owen Smith, "Fluxus became a shifting group based around a core of works that were constantly being added to and changed as artists and performers did or did not participate with the group".²⁵ While Maciunas tried to persuade the artists to grant him the exclusive right to publish their future works, few of them agreed. Moreover, Maciunas was constantly over-estimating what he could deliver and what he could afford. He relied on the cooperation of fellow artists who were also mostly impoverished and frequently let him down. He was also plagued by ill-health and was consequently unable to meet deadlines. Maciunas never seemed to have much money and was extremely frugal with his personal expenses and eating habits. He was continually running into debt because of

his ambitious plans and avoided creditors. In 1976 hired thugs beat him up for not paying a bill and he suffered a punctured lung, several broken ribs and lost one of his eyes. Much of what Maciunas tried to achieve fell short of his goals and shortly before he died in poverty, he concluded in an interview about the Fluxus movement: "We came out to be a bunch of jokers."²⁶

Perhaps George Maciunas' most high-profile event was a retrospective exhibition of Yoko Ono's work at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York in 1971 that doubled as a peace demonstration against the Vietnam War. Titled *This is Not Here*, and advertised in a clever poster in which Maciunas overlapped images of Ono's and John Lennon's faces, it also featured Lennon as a guest artist as well as art work from other artists. It attracted a peace camp of 5000 people as well as celebrity guests at the opening, such as Ringo Starr, Andy Warhol, John Cage, Bob Dylan, and Jack Nicholson and was widely rumoured to be an occasion to bring the Beatles back together again.²⁷ Despite its success, Maciunas managed to upset Yoko Ono by billing himself as the designer of the exhibition rather than as producer and for mismanaging the finances. Yoko Ono wrote Maciunas a six-page letter setting out her complaints "for padding the bills, [and] by taking more credit than you should".²⁸ Maciunas was upset by Ono's complaints and left the exhibition in a huff, refusing to communicate with her for the next five years.²⁹

FLUXUS AS NOMADIC

I now want to turn to Fluxus as a nomadic art movement, applying the concepts of nomadism that Braidotti uses. One can see that geographically Fluxus was nomadic in moving freely from one country to another, setting up regional headquarters in San Francisco, Prague, Nice, and Copenhagen. Although Maciunas tried to censor and control many of the artists, ultimately he was unable and increasingly reluctant to do so. Thus, the movement grew rhizomatically to include many types of artists from all over the world engaging in many artforms. In the early 1960s, they staged events all over Europe, starting in Wiesbaden and traveling as far as

Moscow. Like "wandering minstrels", they created events without much advance planning, deterritorializing familiar artistic venues and creating surprise and consternation wherever they went. Moreover, many of the Fluxus artworks and events were physically nomadic, moving through the landscape. For example, Robert Filliou carried his tiny art works in his hat which he called *Galerie Légitime*. He would walk around the streets confronting people and asking if they liked art. If they agreed, he would show them the art collection in his hat. Furthermore, like Maciunas, other artists were inspired by nomadic peoples and lifestyles. Joseph Beuys, who claimed that he had been rescued by nomadic Tatars after his plane was shot down during the war, and had been revived by their use of fat and felt to heal his body, featured these materials in his artwork for many years such as in his *I Like America and America Likes Me* (1974) in which he lived with a coyote in a New York art gallery for three days. In some of these performances Beuys adopted the role of a shaman, conducting mysterious ceremonies. In this event with the coyote, he projected a strong link with indigenous practices, refusing to step on American soil when he arrived in New York and asked to be taken directly from the plane to the gallery.

Second, Fluxus was also nomadic in subverting national boundaries and promoting the notion of transnational identities. Ken Friedman proposed a Passport to the State of Flux and Beuys founded what he called the state of Eurasia in 1967 as well as a Free International University. Beuys, who joined the Fluxus movement with great enthusiasm in 1963 and attributed all his artworks from 1947 to the movement, even though it had only existed for a couple of years,³⁰ wrote about Fluxus, "[t]he importance of our relationship – and this was the fundamental motivation of the entirety of the Fluxus movement – lay in the way we were involved in developing something for the future, something that was directly connected to human society... the form that Fluxus was trying to promote was first of all a form of openness".³¹

Third, Fluxus promoted the idea of communal space rather than private property. Maciunas, for example, who was inspired by the agricultural cooperative movement in Lithuania and the notion of

the Kolkhoz or collective farm, spent much of the late 1960s and 1970s trying to create a community of artists who could collaborate on projects and live in communal housing.³² In addition to graphic design, architectural work, organising as well as publicizing artistic events and performances, much of his energy was devoted to providing communal apartment buildings for artists in Manhattan, such as in lofts and co-ops in SoHo, as well as creating possible places of artistic retreat in the United States and abroad. While he initially promised funding for artists, he was unable to secure this and later suggested that they should maintain day jobs and adopt anti-professional attitudes, not taking their art too seriously, emphasizing its social purpose rather than its aesthetic elements. He also recommended the anonymity of the artist and promoted collective artworks, though he was not always consistent in this, sometimes creating artists with their own copyright and often creating Fluxkits (which were similar to Duchamp's *La Boîte-en-valise*) devoted to the work of individual artists.

Fourth, as Fluxus artists of many nationalities created events in different countries across Europe, these were performed in a variety of different languages. Moreover, the works themselves were adapted to the particular circumstances and their execution depended on the individual artists who were available to present them. Thus, the same artistic works could change considerably from one event to another. According to Owen Smith, "Fluxus became a shifting group based around a core of works that were constantly being added to and changed as artists and performers did or did not participate with the group".³³

Fifth, as their name implies, the forms and conventions of Fluxus were in flux, developing and changing over the years. Fluxus artists tried out new techniques and technologies as well as new relationships with audiences. Consequently, their identity as a group was hard to define and constantly emerging. Maciunas tried to label the artists with the anonymous name of Fluxus in an early attempt at desubjectivation, (though compared to Braidotti, who takes desubjectivation for granted, he didn't go very far in this direction). He collaborated with many kinds of innovative artists such as Nam June

Paik who used multiple television monitors simultaneously and experimented with complicated video and sound effects, such as in *Cello TV* with Charlotte Moorman, who was later arrested in one of his performances for being half naked. Maciunas also encouraged Richard Foreman in his first productions for his Ontological-Hysteric theatre company, using live actors interacting with live and recorded video.³⁴ Foreman remembers the late 1960s as formative for his subsequent career, “[b]asically, Mekas and Maciunas were my two gurus... They taught me how to make my own way in the world.”³⁵

Some of the performances by Fluxus artists took on the dimension of a ritualistic act, such as Carolee Schneeman’s *Meat Joy* which she described as “an erotic rite – excessive, indulgent, a celebration of flesh as material: raw fish, chicken, sausages, wet paint, transparent plastic, ropes, brushes, paper scrap. Its propulsion is towards the ecstatic – shifting and turning among tenderness, wildness, precision, abandon; qualities that could at any moment be sensual, comic, joyous, repellent. Physical equivalences are enacted as a psychic imagistic stream, in which the layered elements mesh and gain intensity by the energy complement of the audience.”³⁶ Also Herman Nitsch’s *Action of the Orgies-Mysteries Theater* used the bloody parts of animal carcasses in order to create disturbing images of physical slaughter with religious overtones of Christian sacrifice.

Sixth, Fluxus was nomadic in conceiving of art not as a rarified endeavour but as proletarian and as a natural form of work that anyone could do and that was freely accessible. In so doing, they were adopting a minoritarian and iconoclastic position that ran counter to social norms and attitudes in the art world. In characterising the Fluxus movement, Maciunas differentiated the role of the normal professional artist from the Fluxus non-artist. He explained: “To justify [the] artist’s professional, parasitic and elite status in society, he must demonstrate [the] artist’s indispensability and exclusiveness, he must demonstrate the dependability of [the] audience upon him, he must demonstrate that no one but the artist can do art.” In contrast to the normal professional and specially-trained artist, Maciunas described the work of Fluxus as non-professional and something that anyone could do: “Art-amuse-

ment must be simple, amusing, unpretentious, concerned with insignificances, require no skill or countless rehearsals, have no commodity or institutional value.”³⁷ Moreover, from the early 1960s, Fluxus made some tentative moves towards challenging the social norms concerning gender, ethnicity, and sexual practice. They presented the work of African American and Asian artists and, although they were mostly male artists, the number of female performers (including Shigeko Kubota, Yoko Ono, Charlotte Moorman, Carolee Schneeman, Mieko Shiomi, and Alison Knowles) was “unprecedented” for the time.³⁸ Furthermore, Fluxus supported early examples of feminist corporeal performance art, as well as gay films and early forays into performances of gender identity. Maciunas, who liked to cross-dress in private, organised a novel wedding ceremony in 1978, in which he and Billie Hutching, dressed in normal wedding attire, undressed and swapped their clothes in front of the audience. However, by contrast with Braidotti’s nomadism, Fluxus did not go very far in celebrating queer, transgender or subaltern identities, and the group was mainly dominated by men.

Lastly, Fluxus was conceptually nomadic, thinking differently as well as performing and creating differently, breaking down the boundaries between the art world and the real world, presenting new forms of materiality and ways to use the body, and stimulating socio-political transformation through provocative acts. Movement, or what Joseph Beuys called *Bewegung*, was the only force that Beuys considered “capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the death line.”³⁹ Fluxus pieces were often social events that might happen anywhere – in a concert hall or gallery, in the streets, or in someone’s flat or bedroom. Some of the pieces were very simple and straightforward like Yoko Ono’s *Cut Piece* (1965), where she knelt on the floor beside a pair of scissors and invited members of the audience to cut pieces from her clothes and Shigeko Kubota’s *Vagina Painting* (1965), where she attached a red soaked paint brush to the crotch of her underpants and painted red marks on the paper by moving her body. Other performances entailed the innovative use of various technologies, such as prepared pia-

nos, electronic music, video, and film. Sometimes they involved the dismembering or destruction of musical instruments such as pianos and guitars (as in Maciunas’ *Piano Piece No 13*, also known as the *Carpenter’s Piano Piece*, that featured the hammering of nails into the keys of a piano). Still other works were more perplexing and barely comprehensible, such as Joseph Beuys’s *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1965), that seemed to have spiritual overtones as he walked around the gallery space cradling the dead hare in his arms and talking to it about the pictures on the walls. The significance of the dead hare was unclear but it seemed to have had something to do with the notion of the sacredness of the natural world, which was in danger of being destroyed by mankind and needed protection, cultivation and resurrection. Beuys revealed that: “For me the Hare is a symbol of incarnation, which the hare really enacts – something a human can only do in imagination. It burrows, building itself a home in the earth. Thus it incarnates itself in the earth: that alone is important.”⁴⁰

The work of Fluxus has continued to inspire artists today and their influence has been particularly noticeable in the work of the German director Christian Schlingensiefel, who organised flux-masses such as in his promenade performance of *Church of Fear* on a five-day march from Köln to Frankfurt. This nomadic event was designed to contradict normative discourse about the “war on terror”, suggesting that people did not need politicians or priests or religion to scare them and that they could deal with their fears by openly voicing them to each other. When the procession arrived in Frankfurt and Schlingensiefel staged a ‘mass’ and ‘last supper’ in an old tram depot as a church, a journalist commented on the affect of this novel conflation of religion and theatre on her and other members of the audience: “Thereby Schlingensiefel breaks loose whole chunks from the ancestral Christian catholic liturgy and puts them into his own images. By placing these symbols in a totally different context he gets to the core of them. That’s amazing. Found your own church and vote for yourself. Your fear is yours.”⁴¹

In one of his final works, *Kirche der Angst vor dem Fremden in Mir*, which he called a Fluxus Oratorium, Schlingensiefel used Fluxus imagery and

iconography including coffins with “flux” written on them as well as many allusions to Joseph Beuys, such as the dead hare. The performance served as a requiem to himself in his final days of dying of cancer. In the performance, he put x-rays of his diseased lungs above the altar in place of sacred images and invoked images of personal sacrifice as he mixed images of the crucifixion with his own struggle against death. At the climax of the service, when Schlingensiefel himself is conducting the eucharist, he interrupts the ceremony by shouting “Fluxus”.

One of the most innovative aspects of Maciunas’ work was his encouragement of a minimalist style of conceptual art. Yoko Ono was a key contributor to this minimalist style from the early days. Her works were simple, contemplative and frequently consisted of a single phrase meant for contemplation rather than performance, such as her *LAUGH PIECE* “keep laughing a week”, *COUGH PIECE* “keep coughing a year”, *CITY PIECE* “walk all over the city with an empty baby carriage”, and *EARTH PIECE* “listen to the sound of the earth turning”. Simplicity and humour had always been one of the significant aspects of Fluxus, with Maciunas recommending such pieces as George Brecht’s *Symphony no. 3, on the floor* in which the “orchestra sits on edge of chair, conductor enters, give signal, orchestra falls to the floor, by slipping down from chairs”.⁴²

In conclusion, Fluxus was a nomadic art movement that developed in the 1960s and spread rhizomatically across the globe. Although, as its self-proclaimed chairman, he tried to steer and control it, George Maciunas was never really able to do so and it developed a life of its own with many nomadic features that continue to this day. When Maciunas died of cancer in 1978 at the age of 45, his Fluxus friends organised a funeral with four coffins for George Maciunas, all of them empty, thus commemorating him with his own bizarre sense of humour at the end of his life.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- 3 Braidotti, op. cit., p. 21.
- 4 Ibid., p. 17.
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- 7 Roslyn Bernstein and Shael Shapiro, *Illegal Living*, Jonas Mekas Foundation, Vilnius 2010, p. 38.
- 8 Thomas Kellein, *The Dream of Fluxus: George Maciunas: An Artist's Biography*, Edition Hansjörg Mayer, London and Bangkok 2007, p. 43.
- 9 Ibid., p. 65.
- 10 See Owen Smith, "Developing a Fluxable Forum: Early Performance and Publishing" in *The Fluxus Reader*, Ken Friedman, ed., Academy Editions, Chichester, West Sussex 1998, p. 8.
- 11 See, for example, Ken Friedman, "Fluxus and Company" in *The Fluxus Reader*, ibid., p. 247.
- 12 Melanie Hedlund, Gilbert Silverman, Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus etc. Addenda 1*, Inc. &, New York 1983, p. 20.
- 13 Julie Henault, "From America to Lithuania: The Fortunes of the Development of the Fluxus Movement in a Post-Communist Country", *maitrise*, 2005, p. 22.
- 14 For a discussion of these characteristics, see Friedman, "Fluxus and Company", op. cit., pp. 244-51.
- 15 Harry Stendhal, *The Avant Garde: From Futurism to Fluxus*, Jonas Mekas Visual Arts Center, Vilnius 2007, p. 156.
- 16 Liutauras Psibilskis, *Jonas Mekas / The Fluxus Wall*, Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels 2013, p. 135.
- 17 *Mr. Fluxus. A Collective Portrait of George Maciunas 1931-1978*, Emmett Williams, Ann Noel, eds., Thames and Hudson, London 1997, p. 248.
- 18 Ibid., p. 249.
- 19 Ibid., p. 250.
- 20 For example, Maciunas expelled Schneeman from Fluxus for her performance of *Meat Joy*, which showed performers writhing on the floor amidst bloody animal parts from a local butcher's shop, "citing her work's operative scale and expressionistic excesses". Mike Sell, *Avant-Garde Performance and the Limits of Criticism: Approaching the Living Theatre, Happenings/Fluxus and the Black Arts Movement*, University of Michigan Press, Michigan 2005, p. 188.
- 21 Smith, op. cit., p. 16.
- 22 *Mr. Fluxus*, op. cit., p. 9.
- 23 See Smith, "Developing" in op. cit., pp. 10-11. Maciunas and Henry Flynt picketed a concert of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Originale* at Judson Hall in New York in 1964, but most other Fluxus associates were highly critical of this action.
- 24 Emmett Williams referred to it as a "non-movement". *Mr. Fluxus*, op. cit., p. 9. Owen Smith has argued: "This reality – that Fluxus arose out of circumstances rather than as the product of a predetermined strategy – is part of the reason why many have rejected and continue to reject the idea that Fluxus was a movement at all." Smith, op. cit., p. 6.
- 25 Ibid., p. 9.
- 26 Quoted in Kellein, op. cit., p. 9.
- 27 George Harrison had also planned to attend the opening.
- 28 See Kellein, op. cit., p. 123.
- 29 Bernstein and Shapiro, op. cit., p. 174.
- 30 Kellein, op. cit., p. 67.
- 31 Quoted in *Mr. Fluxus*, op. cit., p. 6.
- 32 In 1966, he issued a manifesto with Henry Flynt called *Communists Must Give Revolutionary Leadership in Culture* to promote cost-efficient and durable housing and in the later 1960s, he developed co-ops for artists in SoHo in Greenwich Village.
- 33 Smith, op. cit., p. 9.
- 34 Bernstein and Shapiro, op. cit., pp. 90-8.
- 35 Ibid., p. 90.
- 36 Quoted in *Meat Joy* by Carolee Schneeman in *Electronic Arts Intermix*, <http://www.eai.org/title.htm?id=14751> (accessed 23 December 2014).
- 37 Quoted in *Mr. Fluxus*, op. cit., p. 18.
- 38 "Fluxus developed in the decade leading up to the women's movement, and the prevalence of female participants in its diverse activities was unprecedented." Moma website, <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/womeninflux/> (accessed 3 April 2014).
- 39 Caroline Tisdall, *Art into Society, Society into Art*, ICA, London 1974, p. 48.
- 40 Volker Harlan, Rainer Rappmann, Peter Schata, *Soziale Plastik: Materialien zu Joseph Beuys*, Achberger Verlag, Achenberg 1984, p. 92.
- 41 "Damit bricht Christoph Schlingensiefel ganze Brocken aus der ur-christlich-katholischen Liturgie und setzt sie in sein eigenes Bild ein. Er entkernt jedes dieser Symbole auf das, was sie in einem artfremden Bau noch bedeuten können. Das ist stark. Gründe deine eigene Kirche und wähle dich selbst. Deine Angst gehört dir." Catherina Gilles, *Kunst und Nichtkunst: das Theater von Christoph Schlingensiefel*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2009, p. 72
- 42 Quoted in Kellein, op. cit., p. 102.