THE ART OF PARTICIPATION
THE ART
PARTICIPANTS
1950-1960

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The James Irvine Foundation

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Erwin Wurm One Minute Sculptures, 1997 (see pls. 141–42)

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A note on the captions: throughout this catalogue, measurements (in inches) are provided for paintings, sculptures, and other object-based artworks unless dimensions are variable or were not confirmed in time for publication. No media or dimensions are listed for performances, happenings, or other ephemeral projects.

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Skenováno pro studijní účely
Director's Foreword
Neal Benezra

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art has long been considered a leader in exploring how new technologies transform contemporary art. As one of the first museums to establish a media arts department (in 1987), and through innovative exhibitions such as "010101: Art in Technological Times" (2001), SFMOMA has also addressed the impact of technological culture on how a museum carries out its responsibilities to the public. Our Media Arts team is once again breaking new ground in presenting one of the first exhibitions to examine the rich field of participatory art. The practices addressed in The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now are, in many ways, related to the Web 2.0 zeitgeist: the collective generation and free sharing of content epitomized by online communities such as Wikipedia, Flickr, Facebook, and YouTube. It is by now generally accepted that these social networking sites have begun to radically transform the ways in which we relate to each other—not only online, but also as a society. Perhaps less well known, however, is that artists of the past half-century pioneered (often in analog form) many of the collaborative strategies adopted and technologized by the 2.0 movement. A full understanding of our current moment is impossible without an awareness of this vital prehistory in the cultural arena.

Conceived by Rudolf Frieling, SFMOMA's curator of media arts, The Art of Participation looks back nearly sixty years to contextualize what the critic Umberto Eco has called "open works"—situations created by artists that involve members of the audience as participants or even partners in the art-making process. In a more general sense, this timely project also considers works that address the social systems within which the public engages with art. I would like to acknowledge Rudolf for his innovative conception of the exhibition as a profoundly engaging experience for visitors as well as a richly informative (if necessarily selective) overview of participatory art. Rudolf was aided in his efforts by assistant curator Tanya Zimbardo and curatorial assistant Melissa Pellico, who not only rose to the challenge of coordinating this logistically complicated show, but also contributed insightful text entries to the catalogue. Tammy Fortin provided crucial administrative support during the development of the project.

Ruth Berson, deputy director of exhibitions and collections, administered the many complexities of mounting this presentation, with the able assistance of exhibitions coordinator Emily Lewis. The demanding installation was expertly carried out by Kent Roberts, Greg Wilson, Al Cheves, Steve Dye, and Noah Landis, with significant contributions from registrar Erika Abad and conservators Michelle Barger and Barbara Schertel. Blair Winn and his Development staff, particularly Andrea Morgan, Misty Youmans, and Martina Bill, obtained the funding that underwrote the exhibition and made it possible. The marketing and communications efforts of Nancy Price, Libby Garrison, Caitlin Moneypenny-
Johnston, and Robyn Wise were crucial to building an audience and encouraging public participation in the overall project. Rick Peterson, Simon Blint, and the Visitor Services team paved the way for a satisfying experience in the galleries and other museum spaces. Layna White and Ann Gonzalez in the Collections division must also be thanked for their contributions to the project.

Under the guidance of director of publications Chad Coerver, this remarkable volume was shaped by managing editor Karen Levine into something more than a mere exhibition catalogue. With the enthusiastic partnership of Thames & Hudson, it has grown into a focused survey of participatory practices since the 1950s, incorporating a range of artworks and ideas that could not be accommodated within the scope of the exhibition. The diversity and quality of the reproductions are due in large part to the painstaking, perseverant research of publications assistant Laura Heyenga. The Publications team joins me in thanking authors Boris Groys, Robert Atkins, and Lev Manovich for their contributions to the catalogue. We would also like to acknowledge Adam Brodsky, Eric Heiman, and Iran Narges of Volume Inc., the San Francisco studio behind the book's thoughtful and innovative graphic design. SFMOMA's head of graphic design, Jennifer Sonderby, together with senior designer Terril Neely, effectively translated Volume's idea to the gallery context, while imaging coordinator Susan Backman helped arrange photography of a number of works in the museum's collection.

The Art of Participation is at the heart of a multiyear initiative, supported by the James Irvine Foundation, that will extend the project's spirit of openness and active engagement. Combining exhibition and education programming with other forms of outreach, the effort comprises a kind of laboratory, testing ways in which the three-way relationship between the museum, artists, and the public can be reinvented. That the initiative exists is in large part due to the vision of Dominic Willsdon, Leanne and George Roberts Curator of Education and Public Programs. For their work on The Art of Participation, as well as the larger slate of programming that it has inspired, we thank SFMOMA's entire Education Department, particularly Peter Samis, Frank Smigiel, Stephanie Pau, and Suzanne Stein.

All of us at SFMOMA are grateful to the Irvine Foundation, the museum's Collectors Forum auxiliary, and the Goethe-Institut San Francisco for generously funding the presentation. Without their support of the exhibition, and without the efforts of our truly dedicated staff, we would never have had this outstanding opportunity to develop new ways to engage museum audiences, both now and in the future.
Introduction
Rudolf Frieling

Why participate in the first place? Why not just appreciate what others have made? There are as many motivations to engage in participatory art as there are reasons to refuse. At the same time, we have no choice whether or not to participate in the larger context of society (truly escapist notions aside). We are already embedded members of families, communities, associations, schools, and possibly also museums. Yet the etymology of participation—from the Latin *participare* (to participate), derived from *pars* (part) and the root of *capere* (to take)—stresses the transitive verb.\(^1\) We actively become part of a larger whole without necessarily knowing what this might constitute. We trust that we will find out by participating. But is there an art of participation?

Though many exhibitions have included works of a collaborative or participatory nature, this project represents one of the first sustained explorations of the genealogy of participation in a museum context. What has become a relatively common practice at alternative spaces, in public places, or at community centers is now the focus of a museum exhibition. Is this a contradiction that compromises the anti-institutional stance of many artists? Is there an inherent conflict between the museum as an institution and a truly participatory practice? Or does the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's staging of such a show indicate a paradigm shift within the traditional art context? These questions need to be addressed, though we should be wary of jumping to immediate conclusions.

Tellingly, during its early preparatory stages *The Art of Participation* was called *MyMuseum*, a nod to the rise of online social platforms such as MySpace and Facebook. It has gradually evolved, however, into an exploration of the myriad ways in which a museum can address the public, interact with its audiences, and invite the active involvement of its visitors. The prominence of what has become known as Web 2.0, as well as our museum's proximity to technological culture in the San Francisco Bay Area, has inspired SFMOMA to question its role in a world that has fully embraced the new tools of social networking. In this respect, *The Art of Participation* is an urgent response to a radically changing environment. But far from being positivistic about this development, I propose instead that we look at ways in which artists have addressed and continue to address these issues in their specific (and often entirely subjective) ways. When artists are doing it, the museum must do it as well. It is as easy as that—and yet things are complicated.

One of the inherent and unsolvable problems of participatory art is that an exhibition addressing the genre can never fully achieve its promise. On the one hand, truly participatory art—that which goes beyond symbolic gestures—is a utopian ideal rather than an artistic or political reality. On the other, the inclusiveness of a curated show is inevitably compromised by limited space and funding. By referencing artists and artworks\(^1\) See http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=participation

accessed July 13, 2008.\(^1\)
outside the scope of the gallery presentation, this catalogue aims to expand the context historically, politically, and technologically (see, respectively, the essays by Boris Groys, Robert Atkins, and Lev Manovich). In the plate section, exemplary works by artists in the exhibition are juxtaposed with projects by other significant practitioners, providing, we hope, the material for an informed discussion of participation in art—or rather, as the title of my essay suggests, a discussion that moves us toward a better grasp of the concept. The essay title is an homage to the Fluxus artist George Brecht, who in 1959 named his first solo exhibition *Toward Events*. Suggesting a direction rather than a goal, a process rather than a finished object, it was the first of Brecht’s projects to announce his interest in performative concepts. In the same vein, *The Art of Participation* gestures toward an understanding rather than asserting a definitive statement. More than fifty years after John Cage’s groundbreaking composition 4’33”, the starting point of this exhibition, we have yet to come to terms with the radical implications of participatory art.

Not all of the works in the show are participatory in the strict sense of the word. Some are documents of past performances or events; others are merely concepts. There are also projects that address the limitations of audience engagement. The resistance to or critique of participation is a necessary part of the argument. It is a beautiful and sometimes irritating moment when we come to understand that a participatory event cannot “fail” in the traditional sense. Participatory art is an open invitation: the viewers’ refusal to participate, or the participation of only a small number of people, counts as much as total physical engagement. Watching others participate—what is called “lurking” in the online context—is an inherent part of the experience.

A number of recent exhibitions have included live elements that might previously have been considered nonartistic or too performative to be included in a permanent installation. Some artists, meanwhile, have specifically addressed the functions of gallery spaces, often drawing freely from architecture and design in order to explore a site’s functionality and social use (consider, for example, the lounges, bars, and social spaces created by figures such as Gerwald Rockenschaub and Rirkrit Tiravanija). Reflecting on these developments, SFMOMA has commissioned the Brooklyn-based architectural group Freecell to transform the museum’s Koret Visitor Education Center into a space for live events, screenings, conversations, meetings, workshops, and more. Clearly referencing the do-it-yourself tradition, Freecell’s *Stack to Fold* concept (fig. 1) is a modular cardboard environment with various perforated shapes that visitors may remove and reconfigure as benches, tables, desks, pedestals, and other objects. What starts as a two-dimensional instruction kit becomes, over time, a dynamic three-dimensional landscape for inhabitation and use. Both functional and playful, the project is entirely in the spirit of the Fluxus works that are highlighted in the exhibition.

The gallery presentation of *The Art of Participation* brings together historical and contemporary concepts of participation, tracing a lineage of artistic approaches that include
communication art, institutional critique, relational aesthetics, and social practice. It thus reveals the diverse ways in which artists and viewers have critically engaged art institutions, examined modes of cultural consumption, and challenged not only the traditional model of authorship, but also utopian notions of political participation. It does so, however, by also exhibiting the gap between conceptual gestures and actual processes.

It is a rare opportunity for a curator to be able to take a critical as well as a productive stance in addressing institutional issues. During my research for this project, I was often struck by the fact that museums have approached concepts related to process and participation before, though never in such a comprehensive way. Between 1968 and 1972 there was an especially fruitful period of groundbreaking exhibitions, including the late Harald Szeemann’s Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form (1969) and Documenta 5 (1972) as well as the New York shows Information and Software (both 1970). We are only beginning to understand the full impact of their legacy. One reason is surely the inherent difficulty of dealing with process-based works in an institutional context. SFMOMA exhibited Tom Marioni’s salon The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends Is the Highest Form of Art in 1979, for example, yet it still arouses many concerns thirty years later (one of them being that too many people might take up the artist’s offer of free beer!).

What has changed since the 1960s and 1970s—as was made clear in 1997 by Geert Lovink and Pit Schultz’s Hybrid Workspace project at Documenta 10—is the fact that our contemporary media society has developed a global network of real-time communication that would once have been impossible to imagine. Some museums have reacted to this shift by accommodating the demands of individual artists who wish to present participatory projects. Others have become champions of multimedia, particularly in their educational initiatives, while at the same time keeping the institutional implications of public engagement at bay. This is understandable as a structural condition. But what is at stake now is an entire generation of museumgoers—those who were “born digital.” How do such

footnote

A few pioneers were moving in this direction as early as the 1950s, however. One was Stan VanDerBeek, who started working on films for his “Movie-Drome” in 1957; construction on this community theater in Stony Point, New York, was begun in 1963 and never completed. For an excerpt from VanDerBeek’s “Culture Intercom, a Proposal and Manifesto,” see http://www.mediaartnet.org/source-text/12/. Another example was Nam June Paik, who was among the first to envision the “Electronic Superhighway” in Media Planning for the Postindustrial Society: The 21st Century is Now Only 26 Years Away” (1974), first published in German in Nam June Paik: Werke 1968–1976, Musik, Films, Video (Cologne: Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1978). See http://www.mediaartnet.org/source-text/33/.
audiences respond to the offerings of a museum? How do new modes of communicating and distributing information change a museum’s policies and attitudes? Artists were the first to ask these questions, and it is now up to us to revisit their legacy, up to and including their resistance to illusions of full equality, communication, and participation. Politically speaking, the process of mutual exchange between visitors, users, artists, curators, and collectors is essential.

To paraphrase a truism on art coined by the late German comedian Karl Valentin, participation is beautiful, but it’s a lot of work. During the development of this project, numerous institutions and individuals kindly provided information and loans or collaborated on parts of the exhibition. I would like to express particular thanks to Jeff Aldrich, Susan Allen, Paule Anglim, Carlos Basualdo, Henrik Bennetsen, MacKenzie Bennett, Laura Blereau, Natalie Bouchard, Maria del Carmen Carrión, Rob Ceballos, Diane Chaplin, Alessandra, Álvaro, Eduardo, and Elisabeth Clark, Brian Conley, Daniell Cornell, Karina Daskalov, Susan Davidson, Hugh M. Davies, Steve Dietz, Glynn Edwards, Michelle Elligott, Ulrich Everding, Sabine Folie, Peter Frei, Ed Gilbert, Marian Goodman, Ken Hakuta, John Hanhardt, Jon Hendricks, Stephen Henry, Wulf Herzogenrath, Donald Hess, Antonio Homem, Bellatrix Hubert, Jon Huffman, Brooke Kellaway, Pamela and Richard Kramlich, Irwin Kremen, Laura Kuhn, Sooyoung Lee, Youngchul Lee, Doris Leutgeb, Henry Lowood, Ilona Lütken, Gideon May, Dare and Themistocles Michos, Virginia Mokslaveskas, Christophe Musitelli, Anna Mustonen, Sandra Percival, Paul Rauschelbach, Marcia Reed, Steven Sacks, Doniece Sandoval, Felipe Scovino, Christopher Seguine, Steve Seid, Michael Shanks, Susan Sherrick, Myrtha Steiner, Matthew Tiews, Susan Toland, Roberto Trujillo, and Queenie Wong. Students of the San Francisco Art Institute and the Academy of Art University, San Francisco, helpfully staffed the photo studio for Jochen Gerz’s The Gift. Thanks also to all of the artists who so generously shared their works and ideas with the entire SFMOMA team. This experience of productive collaboration is always the most stimulating and engaging part of organizing any exhibition.

In closing, I must express deep gratitude to SFMOMA director Neal Benezra for embracing the idea behind this exhibition as well as to all of my colleagues who have supported the project from its inception. Though this has been a truly collective effort, I especially thank assistant curator Tanya Zimbardo and curatorial assistant Melissa Pellico, who not only contributed significantly to shaping the presentation, but also took care of thousands of details in the most reliable and good-humored way. I am also fortunate to have the support of Sybille Weber and our children, who so generously reorganized their lives during our move from Germany to San Francisco. Thanks to all of you.
A tendency toward collaborative, participatory practice is undeniably one of the main characteristics of contemporary art. Emerging throughout the world are numerous artists’ groups that pointedly stipulate collective, even anonymous, authorship of their artistic activities. What we are concerned with here are events, projects, political interventions, social analyses, or independent educational institutions that are initiated, in many cases, by individual artists, but that can ultimately be realized only by the involvement of many. Moreover, collaborative practices of this type are geared toward the goal of motivating the public to join in, to activate the social milieu in which these practices unfold. In short, we are dealing with numerous attempts to question and transform the fundamental condition of how modern art functions—namely, the radical separation of artists and their public.

Admittedly, these attempts are not new; indeed, they have their own well-established genealogy. One might contend that this genealogy dates as far back as modern art itself. In the early Romantic era, at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, poets and artists started to form groups that bemoaned the separation of art from its audience. At first glance such complaints may seem a bit surprising, for the separation of the artist from his or her audience was a result of the secularization of art—its liberation from clerical paternalism and censorship. However, the period in which art was able to enjoy its newfound freedom lasted only a short time. Many artists did not
BORIS GROY

GENEALOGY OF PARTICIPATORY ART
consider the modern division of labor, which had conferred a new social status upon art, to be particularly advantageous.

The modern state of affairs can be described easily enough: the artist produces and exhibits art, and the public views and evaluates what is exhibited. This arrangement would seem primarily to benefit the artist, who shows himself to be an active individual in opposition to a passive, anonymous mass audience. The artist has the power to popularize his name, whereas the identities of the viewers remain unknown despite the fact that their validation has facilitated the artist's success. Modern art can thus easily be misconstrued as an apparatus for manufacturing artistic celebrity at the expense of the public. However, what is often overlooked is the fact that under the aegis of modernity, the artist is but an impotent agent at the mercy of the public's good opinion. If an artwork does not find favor with the public, then it is de facto devoid of value. This is modern art's main pitfall: the artwork has no "inner" value of its own. It has no merit other than the recognition the viewing public bestows upon it, for unlike science or technology it has no compelling function independent of the whims and preferences of its audience.

The statues in ancient temples were regarded as embodiments of the gods: they were revered, one kneeled down before them in prayer and supplication, one expected help from them and feared their wrath and concomitant threat of punishment. Similarly, the veneration of icons also exists as a tradition within Christianity—even if God is deemed to be invisible. The artwork has a completely different significance here than it does in secularized modernity. Of course, it was always possible to differentiate between good and bad art. Aesthetic disapproval, however, was insufficient reason to reject an artwork. Poorly made idols and badly painted icons were nevertheless part of the sacred order. Throwing them out would have been sacrilegious. In the context of religious ritual, artworks considered to be aesthetically pleasing and those considered to be aesthetically displeasing can be used with equal legitimacy and to similar effect. Within a specific religious tradition, artworks therefore have their own individual, "inner" value, which is autonomous because it is independent of the public's aesthetic judgment. This value derives from the participation of the artist and his public in communal religious practice, in their mutual membership in the same religious community—an affiliation that relativizes the gulf between the artist and his public.

By contrast, the secularization of art entails its radical devaluation. That is why Hegel asserted early on that art was a thing of the past for the modern world.² No modern artist could expect anyone to kneel before his work in prayer, expect practical assistance from it, or use it to avert danger. The most one is prepared to do nowadays is find an artwork interesting—and of course ask how much it costs. Price immunizes the artwork from public taste to a certain degree. A good deal of the art held in museums today would have ended up in the trash a long time ago had the

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The immediate effect of public taste not been limited by economic considerations. Communal economic participation weakens the radical separation between the artist and his audience, and concomitantly forces the public to respect an artwork because of its elevated price, even if it is not particularly liked. However, there is a big difference between the religious and financial values of an artwork. The price of an artwork is nothing other than the quantifiable result of aesthetic value that others have discerned in it. But public taste is not binding for the individual in the same way that common religion is. The respect paid to an artwork because of its price is by no means automatically translatable into appreciation per se. The binding value of art can thus be sought only in noncommercial—if not directly anticommercial and simultaneously collaborative—practice.

For this reason many modern artists have tried to regain common ground with their audiences by enticing viewers out of their passive roles, bridging the comfortable aesthetic distance that allows uninvolved viewers to judge an artwork impartially from a secure, external perspective. The majority of these attempts have involved political or ideological engagement of one sort or another. Religious community is thus replaced by a political movement in which artists and their audiences both participate. That said, the practices that are relevant to the genealogy of participatory art are chiefly those that not only subscribed thematically to a sociopolitical goal, but also collectivized their core structures and means of production. When the viewer is involved in artistic practice from the outset, every piece of criticism he utters is self-criticism. The decision on the part of the artist to relinquish his exclusive authorship would seem primarily to empower the viewer. This sacrifice ultimately benefits the artist, however, for it frees him from the power that the cold eye of the uninvolved viewer exerts over the resulting artwork.

The Gesamtkunstwerk: The Self-Sacrifice of the Artist

The strategy Richard Wagner set forth in his seminal essay “The Art-work of the Future” (1849–50) is still central to any discourse on participatory art, and it is thus worth recapitulating the main points of his text. Wagner wrote “The Art-work of the Future” shortly after the failure of the 1848 Revolution; it represents an attempt to achieve the political aims of that uprising through aesthetic means. At the beginning of the treatise Wagner states that the typical artist of his time is an egoist who is completely isolated from the life of the people and practices his art for the luxury of the rich; in so doing he exclusively follows the dictates of fashion. By contrast, the artwork of the future must realize the need for “the passing over of Egoism into Communism.”

must forgo the inclination to adopt themes or positions that are merely arbitrary or subjective; their talents should be used to express the artistic desire (Kunstwollen) of the people. Artists must recognize that the people, as an entity, are the only true artist: "Not ye wise men, therefore, are the true inventors, but the Folk; for Want it was, that drove it to invention. All great inventions are the People's deed; whereas the devisings of the intellect are but the exploitations, the derivatives, nay, the splinterings and disfigurements of the great inventions of the Folk."4 Wagner views himself as a consistent materialist; he sees not the spirit but rather matter—substance, life, nature—as the source of truth. Wagner understands the people to be the substance of social life, and that is why he calls upon the artist to forgo his subjective, active, willful spirit and become one with the stuff, the very material, of life.

The unification of all creative genres to create the gesamtkunstwerk, or total artwork, demanded by Wagner (and put into practice in his own work) is by no means to be understood in purely formal terms. It is not a multimedia spectacle designed to captivate the imagination of the viewer. The synthesis of artistic genres is for Wagner more a means to an end: the unity of individual human beings, the unity of artists among themselves, and the unity of artists and the people. Wagner's understanding of the people is thoroughly materialistic—he views them primarily as bodies. In his estimation individual artistic genres are merely formalized, technicalized, mechanized bodily functions separated from the whole of the human body. People sing, dance, write poetry, or paint because these practices derive from the natural constitution of their bodies. The isolation and professionalization of these activities represent a kind of theft perpetrated by the wealthy classes upon the people. This theft must be redressed, and the individual reunited in order to re-create the inner unity of each person as well as the unity of the people. For Wagner the gesamtkunstwerk is primarily a social, even political project: "The great United Art-work, which must gather up each branch of art to use it as a mean, and in some sense to undo it for the common aim of all, for the unconditioned, absolute portrayal of perfected human nature,—this great United Art-work [the artist] cannot picture depending on the arbitrary purpose of some human unit, but can only conceive it as the instinctive and associate product of the Manhood of the Future."5

Wagner's reference to the future is by no means coincidental. He does not want to create his gesamtkunstwerk for his contemporaries, a people divided—in unholy fashion, as he describes it—between an elite and the hoi polloi. By contrast, the community of the future will derive from the realization of the gesamtkunstwerk, a dramatic synthesis that will unite every person participating in it. This drama represents nothing other than the staged demise of the individual, for only such a staging can symbolically

4 Ibid., 80. 5 Ibid., 88.
overcome the isolation of the artist and establish the unity of the people. Notes Wagner: “The last, complete renunciation (Entäußerung) of his personal egoism, the demonstration of his full ascent into universalism, a man can only show us by his Death; and that not by his accidental, but by his necessary death, the logical sequel to his actions, the last fulfilment of his being. The celebration of such a death is the noblest thing that men can enter on.” The individual must die in order to promote the establishment of a participatory—or, as Wagner puts it, a communist—society. Admittedly, there remains a difference between the hero who sacrifices himself and the performer who makes this sacrifice onstage. Nonetheless, Wagner insists that this difference is suspended within the gesamtkunstwerk, for the performer “not merely represents in the artwork the action of the fêted hero, but repeats its moral lesson; insomuch as he proves by this surrender of his personality that he also, in his artistic action, is obeying a dictate of Necessity which consumes the whole individuality of his being.” The performer must surrender his own specific purpose in order to be able to represent the hero’s sacrifice or, as Wagner puts it, “to use up, to destroy the means of art.” In this way he is on even footing with the hero. For Wagner, the performer is not just an actor but also a poet and an artist—the author of the gesamtkunstwerk who has become a performer insofar as he is publicly enacting the surrender of his artistic egoism, his isolation, his supposed authorial autonomy.

This passage is undoubtedly of central importance for Wagner’s essay. The author of the gesamtkunstwerk forgoes his subjective authorial power by reducing his own creative role, reenacting the sacrificial rituals of ancient religions, the sacred feasts of antiquity, the hero’s death in the name of the common good. As far as Wagner is concerned, the author is not dead, as argued later by French poststructuralist theoreticians such as Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida. Were the author truly dead, it would be impossible to differentiate between participatory and nonparticipatory art, because this can only occur through the celebrated surrender of authorship by the artist. The general delight surrounding the idea of the death of the author should not belie the fact that the author must always preordain this demise. One might also claim that the enactment of this self-abdication, this dissolution of the self into the masses, grants the author the possibility of controlling the audience—whereby the viewer forfeits his secure external position, his aesthetic distance from the artwork, and thus becomes not just a participant but also an integral part of the artwork. In this way participatory art can be understood not only as a reduction, but also as an extension, of authorial power.

Wagner is fully aware of this dialectic within the participatory gesamtkunstwerk. Thus he speaks of the necessary dictatorship of the poet-performer, even if he emphasizes that this authority should be predicated upon the basis of common enthusiasm—through the
readiness of the other artists to participate. Wagner states that “The might of individuality will never assert itself more positively than in the free artistic fellowship.”9 This fellowship forms with the express goal of setting the stage for the poet-performer so that he can ceremonially forego his status as author and be absorbed into the people. All other members of the group achieve their own artistic significance solely through participation in this ritual of surrender and self-sacrifice. Wagner’s analysis of comedy is especially interesting in this regard, for it demonstrates that only the main performer is granted the right to fall ceremoniously and tragically. Any attempt by other participants to stage their own authorship also results in the demise of that authorship. In this case, however, the demise of authorship does not look tragic but rather comical. Wagner comments in a footnote:

The hero of the Comedy will be the obverse of the hero of the Tragedy. Just as the one instinctively directed all his actions to his surroundings and his foils—as a Communist, i.e. as a unit who of his inner, free Necessity, and by his force of character, ascends into the Generality—so the other in his rôle of Egoist, of foe to the principle of Generality...will be withstood...hard pressed by it, and finally subdued. The Egoist will be compelled to ascend into Community...and, without further breathing-space for his self-seeking, he sees at last his only rescue in the unconditional acknowledgment of its necessity. The artistic Fellowship, as the representative of Generality, will therefore have in Comedy an even direer share in the framing of the poem itself, than in Tragedy.10

For Wagner, the artist’s renunciation of his authorial status with the express aim of establishing a communal artistic fellowship thus remains ambivalent. The merging of the artist with the people takes place onstage, so the public can only identify with the demise of the hero symbolically. Moreover, Wagner’s artistic language remains alien to the broad mass of the people. In his essay “What Is Art?” Leo Tolstoy describes in brilliantly ironic fashion the disconcerting impression that Wagner’s opera has on a “normal” member of the audience, who is neither able nor willing to penetrate its coded, symbolic meanings.” Furthermore, modern art has attempted both to deprofessionalize itself and to involve the audience more radically and immediately than Wagnerian opera was ever able to do.

Excess, Scandal, Carnival

Many radical avant-garde movements at the beginning of the twentieth century did indeed choose the path designed by Wagner in his “Art-work of the Future.” The Italian Futurists and Zurich Dadaists were representative of groups that pursued the dissolution of artistic individuality, authority, and authorship on many levels of their respective practices. At the same time, they were more direct when it came to activating their audiences, deliberately scandalizing the public or attacking audience members physically. The Italian Futurists grouped around Filippo Tommaso Marinetti repeatedly provoked public scandals—often resulting in common brawls—in order to wrest the audience out
of its purely contemplative, passive attitude (see fig. 2). In this way the Futurists created a new synthesis between politics and art: they understood both as a kind of event design—as strategies of conquering public space by means of provocation, which served as a catalyst to activate and expose the concealed energies of the masses. In her book on Margherita Sarfatti, who played an important role as a mediator between the Futurists and Fascism, Karin Wieland states that the Futurists’ motto was “War on a nightly basis.”

Marinetti introduced a new tone into politics. He exposed a new socio-psychological dimension with his rebellion against tradition and the law, which neither the liberals nor the socialists had anticipated. He incorporated the methods of a political electoral campaign into art: newspapers, manifestos, public appearances, and scandals.

The Futurists’ strategy, aimed less at creating individual art objects and more toward events and collective experiences (see fig. 3), was duly borrowed by the Zurich Dadaists (though admittedly the Dadaists did not subscribe to Futurism’s bellicose nationalistic ideology). The majority of Dada artists, who had gathered in Switzerland during World War I on account of its neutrality, were pacifists and internationalists, a fact that is made all the more interesting when one realizes that their artistic practice owed a lot to Italian Futurism. Participants in Dada events at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, which were chiefly inspired and arranged by Hugo Ball, provoked the audience and allowed the spectacle to result in general tumult. Incidentally, Ball conceived the Cabaret Voltaire as a kind of gesamtkunstwerk from the outset. One might contend that his cabaret was a parodic as well as absolutely serious-minded renaissance of the Wagnerian project. In public performances of simultaneous poetry, during which multiple speakers concurrently recited poems in different languages onstage, the meaning of any individual text and the sound of any individual voice were drowned within the indecipherable, anonymous tonal material. The disappearance of the individual voice amid the collective, resonant whole was the actual aim of the event. Ball writes that “the poème simultan deals with the value of the vox humana. The human organ loses the soul, the individuality…. The poem exemplifies how man is swallowed up by the mechanical process.” In his most well-known performance, on June 25, 1917, Ball appeared wearing quasiepiscopal robes and reciting a poem that consisted of sound combinations having no meaning in any known language (see fig. 4). The sound poem provoked a tumultuous response from the audience. Ball recalls that in order to psychologically...
withstand the abuse from the audience he modeled his vocal delivery upon a church sermon, even if the words remained meaningless combinations of sounds manifesting only the sonic material of language. A new paradoxical religion of materialism was being celebrated here—a transvaluation of nonsense into the highest degree of sense.\(^5\) The same strategy may be observed in the later activities of the Surrealists surrounding André Breton, who collectively forsook conscious control over the production of art in favor of the spontaneous effect of the subconscious, but at the same time were politically engaged and continually provoked public scandal. Various Russian avant-garde groups during the second and third decades of the twentieth century also tried to instigate the demise of the solitary creative artist in order to include the broader masses in artistic practice—and thus transform an entire nation still vibrant from the victory of communism into a gesamtkunstwerk in which all things individual were absorbed into and by the collective (see fig. 5).

The argument against such practices has often been that they are repetitive and, with the passage of time, forfeit their power to shock or provoke. The repetition of authorial surrender seems to diminish the value of this sacrifice, if not to nullify it entirely. However, we know from literature on the subject that the efficacy of sacrificial ritual is primarily a result of its repetitive character. Thus Georges Bataille describes Aztec sacrificial rituals as practices that renewed the vital strength of the society precisely through their constant repetition.\(^6\) In his book Man and the Sacred Roger Caillois describes the collapse of public order that wreaths the people from their customary passivity and unites them whenever a monarch dies or such a death is ritually enacted.\(^7\) It is important not to forget at this juncture that religious sacrificial rituals always featured a central protagonist who represented a king or a god and who was publicly venerated and subsequently sacrificed. Admittedly, the modern artist is allowed to survive, but he does not escape completely unscathed. The artist’s actual sacrifice resides in his self-subjugation to the repetition of the sacrificial ritual and in his renunciation of the uniqueness of his artistic individuality—a kind of second-degree sacrifice, so to speak. And this second-degree sacrifice is

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unique each time it occurs; although the ritual remains the same, the artistic individuality being sacrificed is invariably different.

In this sense it is also interesting to note that if Bataille and Caillois, both of whom were close to Surrealism, describe sacrificial ritual in a tragic tone, Mikhail Bakhtin places the same ritual in the context of carnival: the entertainment and merriment of the people. “In such a system the king is the clown,” Bakhtin writes. “He is elected by all the people and is mocked by all the people…. Abuse is death, it is former youth transformed into old age, the living body turned into a corpse. It is the ‘mirror of comedy’ reflecting that which must die a historic death.” Bakhtin developed his theory of the carnival during the 1930s and 1940s in the Soviet Union, which perceived itself to be an actual communist society. In such a society, individualism—to use the Wagnerian expression—was short of breath: an egoist was automatically an enemy of the people. It is not by chance that Bakhtin describes the demise of the individual, his dissolution into generality, in terms of comedy, not tragedy. This demise elicits only laughter from the people—a happy, carnivalesque laughter that, according to Bakhtin, constitutes and supports the festival in which the entire populace can participate. Accordingly, Bakhtin sees carnival, rather than tragedy, as a model for a participatory—or, as he calls it, a carnivalized—artwork of the future. Far removed from Wagnerian tragedy or gloom, such artwork propagates an exuberant atmosphere of joie de vivre by staging and celebrating the victory of the collective body over individual spirit.

During the 1960s artists’ collectives as well as happenings, performances, and similar events were famously reborn on a worldwide scale. Among their number, to name but a few examples, were Fluxus, Guy Debord’s Situationist International, and Andy Warhol’s Factory (see fig. 6). In all of these cases the twofold aim was both the collaboration of different artists and the synthesis of all artistic media. However, central to these activities was the readiness of artists to forego their isolated, elevated, privileged position in relation to the audience. Fluxus practitioners played at being entertainers and event managers; Warhol propagated art as business and business as art. Whether the
respective artists presented themselves as propagandists, provocateurs, or businessmen is less important than the fact that they tried in equal measure to devalue the symbolic value of art and to surrender their personal individuality and authorship to commonality. All of this was conducted in an atmosphere that was more humorous or carnivalesque than tragic. The Wagnerian ideal of the tragic fall was only realized in a few and thus notable exceptions. For example, Debord’s attempt to dissolve his artistic individuality in the collective practice of the Situationist International collapsed and resulted in (self-imposed) isolation. Debord’s fate is paradigmatic of the kind of problems confronting anyone wanting to stage and control his authorial demise. The insoluble nature of such problems is nevertheless no argument against the gesamtkunstwerk project, but rather the reverse: the formal, logical guarantee of its realization. For it is the paradox of the consciously staged, self-orchestrated fall that causes the author of the gesamtkunstwerk to fail—thus simultaneously realizing the very gesamtkunstwerk itself, which is nothing other than the public performance of artistic failure.

Despite the aforementioned groups’ historical, ideological, aesthetic, and other differences, there is something that unites their attempts to stage the gesamtkunstwerk: they all presuppose the material, corporeal presence of the artist and the audience in the same (real) room. Be it a Wagnerian opera, a futurist scandal, a Fluxus happening, or a situationist event, each has the same goal: to unite the artist and the audience at a particular location. What, then, of the virtual spaces and interactions that increasingly determine cultural practice, particularly in our own time? One is often inclined to think of contemporary digital media as interactive or participatory per se. And so it seems less imperative today to gather people together physically in one place in order to promote a sense of participation in a social event. It seems possible to create this feeling equally well using virtual means, for example through participation in interactive digital mass media via the internet.
Is the Internet Cool?

The relationship between “actual” bodily participation and virtual participation seems particularly relevant to discussions of net art exhibitions and other practices that try to usher internet users into exhibition spaces, making the act of using computers a public event rather than an act performed by the user in the privacy of his or her own home. The socialization and display of computer usage may at first appear to be superfluous if one presupposes that it was already public, interactive, and participatory (albeit virtual). In the case of virtual communication and participation, however, the body of the person using the computer is of no consequence—apart, say, from the physical manifestations of fatigue that are inevitable after a few hours in front of the screen. The experience of bodily presence, for which modern art has continually striven, is absent in virtual communication. As a computer user, one is engrossed in solitary communication with the medium; one falls into a state of self-oblivion, of unawareness of one’s own body, that is analogous to the experience of reading a book.

Indeed, the virtual space of the internet is not so different from the traditional space of literature as one might imagine. The internet does not replace printing, it merely makes it more quickly and cheaply accessible—but also more discerning and demanding for the user. The user is obliged to print out her texts herself, to illustrate and design them instead of simply handing them over to a printer. Thus, when one asks oneself whether the internet is participatory, the answer is yes—but typically in the same way as literary space. Everything that ends up in virtual literary spaces is acknowledged by other participants and provokes a reaction, which in turn provokes further reactions. Literary space is fragmentary, but its protagonists do indeed participate in the competition for recognition. The internet is also a medium for competition—tallies are kept of how many hits a particular site receives, how many mentions there are of this or that user, and so forth. This kind of participation would appear to have little to do with Wagner’s vision of the individual seamlessly merging with the masses. The goal of participatory art within the tradition of the Wagnerian gesamtkunstwerk does not reside in waiting for technical and social progress (which, as is generally known, can never be concluded), but rather in creating universally accessible art events, here and now, beyond education, professionalization, and specialization. An effective use of the internet, however, requires a good deal of specialized knowledge. The technology is subject to constant modification and updates, differentiating users from one another intellectually as well as economically.

The analogy between traditional literary space and the internet is often overlooked, for we generally perceive electronic media such as the web to be fundamentally different from the older analog media. This view is doubtlessly rooted in Marshall McLuhan’s 1964 book Understanding Media, which elucidates the difference between so-called hot mechanical media—the best example being print—and cool electric media such as television. In McLuhan’s view hot media lead to the fragmentation of society. Cool media
conversely create global, participatory, interactive spaces and practices that overcome the isolation of the individual author, so "it is no longer possible to adopt the aloof and dissociated role of the literate Westerner." McLuhan continues: "Electric speed mingles the cultures of prehistory with the dregs of industrial marketeers, the nonliterate with the semiliterate and the postliterate." Under these new medial conditions, the Wagnerian program of the gesamtkunstwerk, which is intent upon uniting the entire populace irrespective of varying levels of education, can be realized automatically through technical progress.

Indeed, McLuhan's understanding of the media shares many similarities with Wagner's vision. Both interpret the individual media as extensions of the corresponding capabilities of the human body. For both the human being is the original medium; all other media are derived from this source. It is not by chance that McLuhan's book bears the subtitle The Extensions of Man. However, unlike Wagner, McLuhan does not call for a return to the source medium (to mankind, the people) in order to overcome the isolation of the individual (codetermined by the separation of the media) and bring about the participation of all. McLuhan attributes the modern isolation of the individual—and, above all, that of the intellectual and the artist—not to the differentiation of the respective media, but rather to the specific constitution of the traditional hot mechanical media that dominated the modern period. McLuhan hopes, therefore, that the new cool electric media will enable transition to a new era of collectivity, simultaneity, and openness.

Nonetheless, McLuhan does not view this transition as a return to the source medium, the human body, but as a complete anaestheticization—a "numbing" of man, as he calls it. He believes that every extension of the human body entails its simultaneous "auto-amputation"; the human organism that has received a medial extension is anesthetized, as it were. According to McLuhan, because electronic media effectuate the extension of the human nervous system, which in turn defines the human being as a whole, their generation entails the ultimate numbing of humanity. Writing is a hot medium because it mobilizes people's attention by demanding a high degree of concentration. On the contrary, electric media are cold because they create a passive communicative situation that demands less attention. "There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV," states McLuhan. "A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in 'high definition.' High definition is the state of being well filled with data." One can reformulate it thus: a cold medium does not differentiate between nonspecialists and specialists, the trained or the untrained—it does not demand the faculty of concentration and specialized knowledge. According to McLuhan, it is precisely this removal of concentrated observation that allows the viewer to extend his or her field of concentration, to improve his or her perception of the environment and of other viewers who might enter this environment. In this
sense television is indeed participatory: turning on the TV does not require specialized knowledge. The television medium is in fact cool; it transmits information in a relatively nonconsequential manner so that the viewer can relax, eschewing the need for concentration. On the other hand, work on the computer—particularly the internet—demands a degree of concentration that quite possibly even exceeds the focus required to read a book. The internet is thus a hot medium in comparison to TV.

The purpose served by an exhibition that offers visitors an opportunity to use computers and the internet publicly now becomes apparent—namely the cooling down of the internet medium. Such an exhibition extends the attention and focus of the viewer. One no longer concentrates upon a solitary screen but wanders from one screen to the next, from one computer installation to another. The itinerary performed by the viewer within the exhibition space undermines the traditional isolation of the internet user. At the same time, an exhibition utilizing the web and other digital media renders visible the material, physical side of these media—their hardware, the stuff from which they are made. All of the machinery that enters the visitor’s field of vision thus destoys the illusion that everything of any importance in the digital realm only takes place onscreen. More importantly, however, other visitors will stray into the viewer’s field of reference, and they will often seem more interesting than the exhibits themselves. In this way the visitor becomes one of the exhibits, for he is aware that he is being observed by the others. He is aware of his physical position in space. A computer-based installation thus prompts the viewer’s conscious experience of his own body, an experience normally marginalized by solitary labor at the computer.

A computer installation stages a social event and is bestowed in turn with a political dimension. Even if it does not provoke a brawl in the futurist manner, it facilitates an encounter between diverse individuals who become aware of the communal presence of their bodies in space. Put another way, it is concerned with rendering visible the multitude flowing through the rooms and spaces of modern art museums, which have long since lost their supposed elitist character. The relative spatial separation of art exhibitions does not at all signify an aversion to the world, but rather a delocalization or deterritorialization of the viewer, which in turn serves to widen the perspective of the larger communal space. It is here, in the real space of social communication, that the cooling of the virtual can take place—a process that, if you will, counteracts the dissolution of real space into virtuality, which McLuhan once demanded of art by defining it as “exact information of how to rearrange one’s psyche in order to anticipate the next blow from our own extended faculties.”

Translated from the German by Tim Connell
TOWARD PARTICIPATION IN ART
The performance should make clear to the listener that the hearing of the piece is his own action—that the music, so to speak, is his, rather than the composer’s.

—John Cage on 4′33″

Who controls the definition of art—the artist, curator, critic, or viewer—is no longer the question. Art is now a contested site defined collectively by all of these actors, each of whom must surrender a measure of authorial control. With the rise of participation, the artistic arena does not merely encompass a broader range of possibilities; rather, these possibilities are being reviewed, acted upon, and changed even as they are being proposed. This is as much a promise as it is a problem. By entering an artistic situation and actively becoming part of it, the participant can actually be transformed: “I don’t know what I will do for the rest of my life. It can’t get any better than this!” exclaimed the artist Kiki Smith after having been carried through the streets of Manhattan as a “living icon” in Francis Alÿs’s Modern Procession (2002; fig. 7). For Smith, this might have been the moment implied by the ancient Greek term kairos. Whereas tyché refers to the active construction of situations in which chance encounters might happen (closely linked to the notion of techne, the promise of future technologies and utopian possibilities), kairos refers to the passive, unplanned encounter, made possible by a will to let go and enjoy the serendipity of the event. Kairos is a moment of rupture and suddenness, suggesting an unexpected presence and an opening of the senses. This naturally can be difficult to achieve in a museum context; it is easier to experience when artists reclaim the streets.
John Cage’s 4’33” (1952; pls. 1–3), Allan Kaprow’s 18 Happenings in 6 Parts (1959), and Nam June Paik’s Random Access (1963; pls. 24–25) and Participation TV (1963; pl. 23) are moments marking a beginning: something happens. This apt definition of the term happening, coined by Kaprow, does imply a wish for serendipity. By embracing chance, by giving up control, by inviting others to participate in the production of the artwork, by claiming the radical dismantling of traditional systems for evaluating art, these pioneering figures faced a paradox from the very start: how to do away with art by making art. Art and antiart, and art and life, have always been closely intertwined in this paradox. But for those who do take part, the paradox is precisely the driving force and pleasure principle behind much participatory art. Whatever happens, it will stand out as an artistic experience.

From work to process, from performance to performativity, from intent to indeterminacy, this paradigm shift has been furthered by a number of avant-gardes, including Dada, Situationism, and Fluxus. Yet, despite a history of scandals, manifestos, movements, and antimovements, the art world has generally proven derisive of participation (perhaps unsurprisingly, since few marketable objects are actually generated through such dynamics). A number of prominent artists have even voiced an explicit mistrust of or persistent antipathy toward participation—consider, for example, Bruce Nauman’s dictum “I mistrust audience participation.” Is it a prerequisite for art to produce authorial positions even when the artists have based their practice on collaborative or participatory effects? Andy Warhol, the “author” of the first do-it-yourself artworks (see pl. 10), is still considered to be the creator of his work, precisely because the idea of the workshop and the role of the Factory could not be reconciled with an authorial position—a paradox upon which he built his career.

Artists interested in communal processes have experimented with various strategies to relinquish that very position. The desire to invest art with nonart social or political intent—a practice that is lived and not just temporarily experienced—has led some artists to make a fatal decision to step outside the artistic context entirely, moving into educational, activist, or commercial fields. Some have been involuntarily marginalized, while others have simply dropped out, such as the Brazilian Lygia Clark (see pls. 36–42), the Argentinean Marta Minujín (pl. 35), and the recently rediscovered German artist Charlotte Posenenske, whose work was featured at Documenta 12 in 2007.

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3. Bruce Nauman (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1994).
4. The closest Nauman ever came to an instructional piece was Body Pressure (1972), which he conceived as a series of do-it-yourself actions performed against a wall.
Artists might find tactical allies in groups, collaboratives, or networks yet still work independently, as did Felix Gonzalez-Torres (see pls. 119–21), who in the 1980s was a member of the activist collective Group Material (fig. 20). Today, the German-based conceptual artist Tino Sehgal can forgo both documenting his artistic situations and creating saleable collateral around them, yet still rise to prominence thanks to uniquely ephemeral performances in the gallery context. But this is a relatively new phenomenon, and it indicates yet another shift. Notions of participatory enactments, of the significance of the presence or trace of the visitor, and of evolving patterns or futile situations have driven recent, highly successful exhibitions by Rudolf Stingel and Rirkrit Tiravanija (see fig. 8). In 2007 a retrospective of Kaprow’s ephemeral oeuvre (complete with a series of reenactments) began touring to museums in Europe and the United States. Despite the demise proclaimed by Roland Barthes, we cannot seem to get rid of the author; the harder we try the stronger the myth returns. Ultimately, if artists wish to operate within the art world, they will inevitably be perceived as the ones responsible for the work, even if they involve collaborators, let others take on the actual production, utilize online networks, or—and this is our specific focus here—court unknown participants.

Although The Art of Participation focuses on collaborative practices in general, this essay specifically addresses questions related to what one might call open systems. In media art the term interactive has often been criticized for being simply euphemistic: no true interaction is possible when one must select from a predefined set of options. What interests me, rather, is something approaching true interactivity—an opening up to conditions, locations, and participants who contribute actively to the realization of a participatory work. The sculptor Richard Serra once defined artistic activity by listing a series of


The physical actions: to roll, to crease, to fold, to store, etc. The art historian Miwon Kwon later translated Serra’s concept to site-specificity: to negotiate, to coordinate, to compromise, to research, to organize, to interview, etc. Today we might augment these lists with other activities that specifically highlight the participatory act: to generate, to change, to contribute, to enact, to dialogue, to translate, to appropriate, to tag, etc.

In 1969 the artist Douglas Huebler (pl. 63) proposed the idea of a work that could be realized without the direct intervention of the artist:

A system existing in the world disinterested in the purposes of art may be “plugged into” in such a way as to produce a work that possesses a separate existence and that neither changes nor comments on the system as used....An inevitable destiny is set in motion by the specific process selected to form such a work freeing it from further decisions on my part. I like the idea that even as I eat, sleep or play the work is moving towards its completion.
Huebler’s notion of a self-generating artwork was one of a number of related ideas that surfaced in the 1960s. In 1962 Umberto Eco introduced the notion of the “open work,” and in 1970 the critic and curator Jack Burnham organized an exhibition titled Software: Information Technology; Its New Meaning for Art at the Jewish Museum, New York. Deeply influenced by cybernetics and communication theory, Burnham’s project propagated the concept of open systems. Since the introduction of technological systems into the arts, practitioners have voiced suspicion about the manufacturing of community and consent through art. Artists did not want to side with any technology that was spearheading governmental or utilitarian operations. Thus, no genre called participatory art (as opposed to, say, video art) emerged from these early discussions of conceptual art and technology.

The 1990s works associated with relational aesthetics (a description that goes back to Lygia Clark’s practice of the 1970s, which centered on what she called “relational objects”) and today’s networked projects are both dialogical and contextual; commonly used terms include “conversational art” (Homi K. Bhabha), “dialogue-based public art” (Tom Finkelpearl), and “dialogical art” (Grant Kester). In contemporary art, unlike traditional dialogical forms such as live music or theater, discursive practices are not distinct from, but rather constitute and frame, visual practice. But dialogue is not an intrinsic value. Who is talking to whom about what? What is the artistic element of participation in communities or social-networking projects? And can a shared space in Second Life help us to understand real life? Even as I write in 2008, there still exists a gap between conceptual works associated with relational aesthetics, works that address social practice, and works that reflect and act upon our networked and globalized society. What role do aesthetic concerns play when an artist claims to have a real impact on communities, intersubjective actions, political agendas, and networking tools? One thing is clear: the art is constituted only through the participant’s activity. In the words of the artist Liam Gillick, “My work is like the light in the fridge, it only works when there are people there to open the fridge door. Without people, it’s not art—it’s something else—stuff in a room.” One can only hope that the fridge is not empty. Tom Marioni’s salon, active since 1970 (see pl. 82), makes it clear that it is not: we are offered FREE BEER! But seriously, what are we participating in? Does sharing a drink create a new experience? The media theorist Geert Lovink reminds us that, at least in the online world, there is a one percent rule: “If you get a group of 100 people online one will create content, to

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will interact with it (commenting or offering improvements), and the other 8g will just view it.\textsuperscript{12} The same might apply to participatory works of art in the museum.

In order to bridge the discursive gaps between technology and contemporary art, I will look at key historic figures and situations that emerged throughout the twentieth century: Bertolt Brecht, Dada, and an innovative museum practice by Alexander Dorner in the 1920s and 1930s; explorations of radical new art forms and public actions in the 1960s; and contemporary strategies today, a field that is influenced by institutional critique without being antinstitutional, and that is embracing networking technologies without claiming a utopian notion of technology.

Between the Wars: A Vision of the Future

In Cologne in 1920 Max Ernst placed an axe next to one of his sculptures in the Dada exhibition Spring Awakening, while one of his drawings invited visitors to fill in a blank space he had left in the composition. Hugo Ball’s Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich (see fig. 4) staged scandalous events that made art history (and prefigured the Fluxus events of the 1960s [see pls. 12–13]), and at around the same time the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau realized the idea of a crossdisciplinary school, helping László Moholy-Nagy, among others, to develop a practice that combined sculpture and film, introducing a time-based aspect to the perception of art in space. But Moholy-Nagy went even further, conceiving art as something that could be industrially manufactured and ordered by phone. He designed his Telephone Pictures, made around 1922, as drawings on graph paper, but he left the actual production to an enamel factory, ordering versions of the same work via telephone (see fig. 9).\textsuperscript{13} Marcel Duchamp had been the first artist to “sign” a work remotely by communicating an instruction:

Take this bottle rack for yourself, I’m making it a “Ready-made,” remotely. You are to inscribe it at the bottom and on the inside of the bottom circle, in small letters painted with a brush in oil, silver white color, with an inscription which I will give you herewith, and then sign it, in the same handwriting as follows: [after] Marcel Duchamp.\textsuperscript{14}

Not only could the work be produced by others, but even the signature—the very embodiment of artistic identity—could be executed by someone else.

Alexander Dorner, the director of the Landesmuseum in Hannover, Germany, from 1923 through 1936, is generally

\textsuperscript{12} Geert Lovink, Zero Comments: Blogging and Critical Internet Culture (New York: Routledge, 2007), xiii. \textsuperscript{13} See http://www.moma.org/collection/provenance/items/94_71.html. For Art by Telephone, an exhibition planned by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, in 1968 but never realized, thirty-six artists, including Joseph Kosuth, Richard Serra, and James Lee Byars, were asked to call the museum to communicate their proposals, which would then be executed by MCA staff. In the same year Sol LeWitt developed his concept for wall drawings to be realized by the works’ owners or museum staff. \textsuperscript{14} Marcel Duchamp, letter to Suzanne Duchamp, January 15, 1926, reprinted in Affectively, Marcel: The Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp, ed. Francis M. Naumann and Hector Obalí, Ludion, trans. Jill Taylor (Ghent, Belgium: Ludion Press, 2000), 42.
credited as one of the visionaries who helped to radically change the way we think about museums. He not only introduced the idea of a living museum—a museum of the present—but also revolutionized the concept of display. In 1927 he collaborated with the artist El Lissitzky on the realization of the famous Abstract Cabinet, whose walls appeared to change according to the works on display and the movements of visitors. Later, the Room of Our Time (fig. 10), designed by Moholy-Nagy and Dorner in 1931, conceptualized a more dynamic role for visitors, proposing that they view films by activating rolling screens and pushing buttons to start the projections—not unlike the act of setting in motion Moholy-Nagy’s Light Prop for an Electric Stage (Light-Space Modulator) (1930), which casts a series of abstract compositions throughout the surrounding space. During the 1940s and 1950s, having fled Nazi Germany for the United States, Dorner continued to pursue his idea of a new museum:

The next type of art museum must be not only an “art” museum in the traditional, static sense, but, strictly speaking, not a “museum” at all. A museum conserves supposedly eternal values and truths. But the new type would be a kind of powerhouse, a producer of new energies.

Duchamp took this idea of energizing the reception of art as far as technology allowed. In 1938, at the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme in Paris, visitors entering his totally dark space used flashlights to light up the art on display, thereby exhibiting their process of interaction with the works and the environment even as they illuminated the objects.

The displacement of time and space was an artistic strategy that found its first agents in the 1920s. Its adherents proposed a vision of art that was no longer a finite object, but rather a time-based experience—a “living museum,” to use Dorner’s term—subject to the intervention of coproducers, be they institutional professionals, fellow artists, or audience members. Art happened through collaborative effort, sometimes via communication or remotely networked connections. Bertolt Brecht envisioned the potential of two-way communication in 1932—a year before his hopes were destroyed by Hitler and Goebbels—in the essay “The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication.” He predicted that this apparatus would know how to receive as well as to transmit, how to let the listener speak as well as hear, how to bring him into a relationship instead of isolating him; On this principle the radio should step out of the supply business and organize its listeners as suppliers.

Any attempt by the radio to give a truly public character to public occasions is a step

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15 See Samuel Cauman, The Living Museum, Experiences of an Art Historian and Museum Director, Alexander Dorner (New York: New York University Press, 1988). 16 “Lissitzky placed these unframed, self-transforming compositions by Picasso, Leger, Gleizes, Lissitzky, Gabo, Mondrian, Baumeister, and Moholy on walls striated with miles of vertically aligned metal strips. The strips, painted in three different colors, white, black, and gray, produced a cool shimmer that changed with the slightest movement of a visitor’s head. To multiply this effect, the colors were applied in a different order in different wall areas. . . . Inserted in these vibrating, living walls were sliding panels. These, when moved, revealed more pictures underneath.” Cauman, 203–4. 17 Room of Our Time was never fully functional or finished. 18 Alexander Dorner, The Way Beyond “Art” (1947), quoted in Cauman, 206. 19 Originally Duchamp had planned a sensor-driven lighting control so that the light would shine only when someone approached the work. This failed for technical reasons.
in the right direction. . . . Such an attempt by the radio to put its instruction into an artistic form would link up with the efforts of modern artists to give art an instructive character.20

Obviously, Brecht is referring to himself as a modern artist. His proposal is based on the assumption that, were radio to make the vox populi heard, true public opinion would change society for the better—a hope we do not necessarily share today.

The 1960s: The Future Is Now

With their didactic agendas, agitprop art and Brecht’s theater experiments implied a revolutionary subject. But after World War II, political art was tainted by association with fascist and communist policies that reacted strongly against the individualist notion of art. What individual or communal participation in art truly meant (beyond the vision of an educational process) was ambiguous. Postwar artists thus adopted a variety of complex strategies involving what Fluxus member Dick Higgins would term “intermedia,” emphasizing an oppositional stance more than a specific agenda. Practitioners involved in Fluxus, in particular, helped to distribute a more open idea of instruction in the artistic context.

Yet the turn toward a more open model could result in a variety of actualizations of participation: a badly worded or misused instruction, a misinterpreted or disillusioning event, an artist’s changing or obscuring attitude, or even the catastrophic end of the entire exhibition. In 2002 a visitor to a retrospective of work by the Fluxus artist Yoko Ono at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art reported having an antagonistic phone conversation when Ono’s infamous Telephone Piece (1966) rang. The encounter was conditioned by the anxiety produced by the event, the artist’s unexpectedly annoyed reactions, and the public observing the conversation.21 Alternatively, Robert Morris’s 1971 retrospective at London’s Tate Gallery had to be closed after visitors destroyed some of the works through overuse (see fig. 11). But to what extent can one actually speak of failure? One might argue that it was the public’s enthusiastic response to the Morris exhibition that ultimately forced the institutional authorities to act. It was Ono again who “exhibited” and made explicit the aggressiveness of her (specifically male) audience through her historic and frequently reenacted 1964 performance Cut Piece (pl. 47), in which she literally offered up her person as an object to work on.22 Marina Abramović took this a step further in her performance Rhythm 0 (1974; pl. 56), during which the dynamics of visitor participation evolved from inactivity in the first hours to serious aggression later on. By the end,

20 Quoted in Video Culture: A Critical Investigation, ed. John G. Haushardt (New York: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1986), 53–54. 21 See http://www.boxoo.com/yoko_uno.html. A more recent installation of the work appeared at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia as part of the 2007 exhibition Ensemble; one of the guards there mentioned to me that the artist often called outside the museum’s opening hours. 22 A number of artists have reinterpreted Cut Piece, including Lynn Hershman Leeson (1992), Felipe Dulsáides (2000), Marina Abramović (2006), and even Yoko Ono herself (1965 and 2003; pls. 45–46).
some viewers began to make such eager use of some of the potentially harmful objects Abramović had provided on a table that others present felt the need to intervene, ending the performance in order to protect the artist the moment a revolver was picked up.23

The possibility of ignoring instructions and social boundaries ultimately reveals the inherent conflicts of a proposal, mirroring a specific condition in which the actualization of a piece occurs. To engage with a work requires a willingness to be intrigued or challenged by its implicit and explicit rules of behavior. When these are violated, the responsibility of the participants is dramatically exposed. A participatory work thus needs an environment that makes possible the actual enactment of these rules. However, as the Morris example shows, this represents a fragile balance of trust and responsibility. The audience’s exploitation of proposed situations or even the total absence of participation (a concept that no one enacts or realizes, an invitation that no one accepts)—these possibilities are inherent to the potentiality of participatory art. Yet the extent to which a work generates an ongoing engagement, as opposed to the provocation of an end, may be considered a measure of its participatory quality.

Artists have always been aware of the distinction between idea/concept/score and realization/practice/performance. In fact, one question runs persistently through discussions of participatory art: where does the artwork reside—in the text, in the act of reading, in the act of imagining the enactment, or in the act of doing it? Many Fluxus pieces relied upon the idea that one person could activate the work (or, alternatively, upon its representational activation by a select number of performers for the public), but they did not necessarily need to be acted out in space. Ono often worked with enigmatic and poetic instructions, first exhibited to a Western audience at George Maciunas’s AG Gallery, New York, in 1961. The display of text was combined with the possibility of realization, offering instructions to be carried out by the visitors. Ono’s Painting to Be Stepped On (1960)—“Leave a piece of canvas or finished painting on the floor or in the street”—was originally conceived to be completed by chance and contingent factors. The art historian Bruce Altshuler calls it a logical step that in Ono’s May 1962 exhibition at the Sogetsu Art Center, Tokyo, she displayed only instructions on sheets of white paper.24 This act of simplification and purification—which in some ways prefigured Minimalism—represented an attempt to leave behind more theatrical tactics, such as her first address to the audience during the 1962 performance Audience Piece. In fact, theatricality would seem to be an antithetical position for visual artists for a long time to come.

Most prolific in generating ideas and poetic strategies was the American artist George Brecht, whose event cards were distributed via Fluxus editions such as Water
TWO EXERCISES

Consider an object. Call what is not the object “other.”

EXERCISE: Add to the object, from the “other,” another object, to form a new object and a new “other.” Repeat until there is no more “other.”

EXERCISE: Take a part from the object and add it to the “other,” to form a new object and a new “other.” Repeat until there is no more object.

fig. 12

Yam (1963; pl. 8) and Fluxkit (1965–66; pls. 15–16). These early collaborative tool kits included not only his instructions for actions, but also for the creation of objects or tableaux. The directions left almost everything to the realizer; see, for example, the instructions for Two Exercises (1961; fig. 12). Brecht allowed an openness and indeterminacy in the execution of his works that placed them almost on the brink of vanishing into invisibility. At the same time, they were an effective counterpoint to the neo-Dada Fluxus events staged by Joseph Beuys or Wolf Vostell, which were ultimately driven by the artist’s persona (this was the inherent paradox of Beuys’s collaborative and participatory political practice [see pls. 78–79]).

Although visual experimentation has had a long tradition in literature since Stéphane Mallarmé (a fact reflected by one of Dan Graham’s earliest conceptual works, the Schema poem from 1966 [pl. 11]), it was Sol LeWitt who legitimized the linguistic formulation of an idea as artwork, triggering a whole series of art-by-instruction pieces. Lawrence Weiner, who, like Huebler, was among the artists promoted by the New York gallerist Seth Siegelaub, started his signature text-based work after one of his early outdoor sculptures was destroyed by the public. His insight was that the idea was enough for him, and he consequently ranked the idea higher than any actual realization. Weiner’s solution to the problem of open and potentially destructive situations was conceptual and still represented a one-way communication between sender (artist) and receiver (collector), but it inspired artists such as Huebler, Graham, and Hans Haacke to examine the larger social, political, and economic powers at work in the art world—including the conditions of participating in a show, owning a work, and exhibiting. Early on, Haacke analyzed these conditions as an ideological frame:


[Artists are] unwitting partners in the arts syndrome and relate to each other dialectically. They participate jointly in the maintenance and/or development of the ideological make-up of their society. They work within that frame, set the frame, and are being framed.

Those who act on a given work and its frame are thus not merely anonymous participants. They include a series of active stakeholders: the gallerist, collector, curator, critic, and representatives of supervising authorities, such as municipal or state commissions and trustees. Reflecting this political framework, Haacke’s News (1969; pl. 70) exhibited the
real-time processes of political decision making by being the first artwork to bring the daily news into the gallery. Technically speaking, participation in art is a given in nearly every instance in which art is publicly exhibited (though participation in the form of professional contributions by museum or gallery staff is likely to be invisible). Artists such as Haacke and Stephen Willats (see pls. 72–74) consequently address issues of control, often deliberately limiting participation to a predefined set of choices through voting.

The implication of unwitting participants (individuals or institutions without a specific interest in the work) is a frequent participatory strategy. Consider, for example, the role of the postman in the dissemination of mail art (see pl. 21), the unsuspecting museum visitors approached by Vito Acconci during Proximity Piece (1970; pl. 58), the state authorities provoked by Sanja Iveković’s private activity in Triangle (1979), the customs agents who censored Maria Eichhorn’s Prohibited Imports (2003; pl. 117), and the Mexican police officers who played a decisive role in Francis Alÿs’s Re-enactments (2001; pls. 133–38). A critical participatory strategy is thus to expose precisely the conditions that frame and limit actions in public space.28 Alÿs’s piece, however, goes beyond ideological critique to examine a variety of patterns of complicity. The cooperation of the authorities in his reenactment complicates the matter and irritates the viewer who witnesses the same action on parallel screens. In fact, the very notion of reenactment—see also Ono’s 2003 take on Cut Piece (pl. 46)—points toward the possibility of shifting conditions and contexts, in the real world and in the arts. The urgency of early performance—"no rehearsal" was Abramović/Ulay’s motto—is confronted with a more complex representation as rehearsal or reenactment.

The 1960s not only saw a divide between conceptual and political artists, but also marked the emergence of others who, influenced by Fluxus and the rise of happenings in the wake of Kaprow (see pls. 9, 28–34), challenged spectators emotionally or even physically. Brazilian artists were among the most active and creative in addressing art’s relation to participants. Hélio Oiticica, for example, saw his installation Eden (1969; pl. 43) as a "suprasensorial experiment" and an embodiment of his concept of "creleisure" (creative leisure). He created a series of costumes called Parangolés, Brazilian slang for "agitated situation" or "sudden confusion."29 For Opinião 65, a 1965 exhibition at the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro, Oiticica invited street dancers to perform wearing his P4 Cape—a radical, carnivalesque intervention into an official event that resulted in the expulsion of the...
dancers. The practice of Lygia Clark, meanwhile, evolved from the production of minimalist and constructivist sculpture to the creation of group experiences outside the art context, eventually focusing on a serious concept of therapy or “self-structuration.” Like Otticica’s sensuous installations, Clark’s group-therapy situations and relational objects (see pls. 36–39) sought to create temporary situations and spaces that facilitated a more open and body-centered experience of art. Thus, institutional critique could also take the form of testbeds for new and liberated social interactions. These artists provided opportunities for communal gatherings and discourse that prefigured the idea of an open system that is constructed by participants—what we might call “true” participation today. Such a system can incorporate pregiven rules and also establish new ones collaboratively. In either case, there is no work if it is not actively and collaboratively constructed, physically or mentally. “It is art if I say so” (to paraphrase Robert Rauschenberg) thus becomes “It is art if you think so” (Lawrence Weiner).³⁰

The degree to which a work is a social activity can also influence its reception. If it happens in the context of the art world, it is easily identified; if it happens elsewhere, the project becomes more closely associated with community work or even invisible as art, vanishing altogether into the fabric of real life.³¹ In New York, real life is constituted partly by cocktail parties, or at least we might get that impression from documents on Argentinean artists’ contributions to the new communal media practice of the late 1960s. In 1968, at the Art Gallery of the Center for Inter-American Relations, Marta Minujin conceived one of the first open projects to incorporate the media in a participatory installation. She called her project, Minucode (pl. 35), a “multi-social and media environment experience”:

³⁰ In 1961 Rauschenberg was invited to participate in an exhibition at Galerie Iris Clert, Paris, in which artists were to create and display portraits of the gallery’s owner. His contribution was a telegram declaring, “This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so.” “It is art if you think so” is not a direct quote of Weiner, but rather a summary of his stance. For more on this notion, see the Kester writings cited above; What We Want Is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art, ed. Ted Purves (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2004); and Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices, ed. Johanna Billing, Maria Lind, and Lars Nilsson (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007). ³¹ Marta Minujin, undated exhibition proposal, Information exhibition archive folders, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

³² 320 people belonging to four different social groups, selected from answers to a questionnaire published in several metropolitan newspapers, were invited to four “group” cocktail parties. During the cocktail parties, which were filmed, eight representatives of each group were asked to create a second environment or light show in an adjoining room. Now you are going to have an audiovisual experience which consists in the projection of each of the cocktail parties’ films and the recreation, at the same time, of the light show created by the eight representatives of each cocktail party. This experience is the MINUCODE.³²

The artist’s division of the participants into groups was intended to reflect the social divisions of “economy, politics, entertainment, and ornamentation.”

Minujin’s audiovisual representation of social categories was not realized in real time, and it also included a process of decision making by the artist. The Argentinean Group Frontera, however, took a different approach to participation with their recording booth and playback device (pl. 71) in the 1970 exhibition Information, organized by Kynaston McShine at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. “All individuals
are creators," they stated, "but what they create is not necessarily forcefully incorporated into the cultural framework. The introduction of a micro-medium into the mass media is necessary."

The group encouraged an alternative method of production that was open to all participants, countering the dominant mode of television (and prefiguring the idea of an open platform as developed in 1980 by artists such as Wendy Clarke in her video production Love Letters and Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz in their seminal public satellite event Hole-in-Space [pls. 90–91]). Group Frontera's was titled Itinerary of Experience, and it ironically envisioned participants' frustration with their own electronic performance. Step six of the itinerary was thus described as "Person unhappy with results," causing step seven, "Person smashing mechanism," leading to the eventual "complete disintegration" of the piece in step twelve.

Exhibiting the audience was an ambivalent process that demanded a more active or engaged viewer. It was precisely this initial embrace of the audience's frustration, anger, or disinterest that would be lost in some of the more didactic and utopian manifestations of alternative collaborative and participatory structures. Joseph Beuys (pls. 76–79), for example, promoted the notion of social plastic, but he was too much of an artistic celebrity to ever become one with his political fight or be an equal member of a political group. Guy Debord's Situationist International, meanwhile, dismissed the art system as inherently "spectacular." Following the educational model of Brecht or Beuys, other artists chose to address the supposedly passive audience directly, activating that "medium" in a very physical sense. As a result, a gap opened between the perception of an artistic experience as inherently open and the proclaimed activation of that process.

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33 Kynaston McShine, Information (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 47. 34 Other steps included ten. "Reading for Kynaston McShine's office," although the curator would have departed for Argentina during step eleven. Group Frontera, undated exhibition proposal, Information exhibition archive folders, Museum of Modern Art, New York. 35 See, for example, Peter Weibel's closed-circuit installation Audience Exhibited (1968) and VIDEO EXPORT'S TAPP. and TAETZKIND (TAP) and TOUCH CINEMA, 1968; pls. 49–51) and Facing the Family (1971).
The 1990s to Now: Revisiting the Future

Although the utopian investment of Fluxus and early media artists in collaborative and networked practices ultimately failed to change society at large (or even the museum as an institution), practitioners of the 1990s revived their predecessors’ approach to open situations, marking the end of a decade that avoided exploration of participatory social concepts. A conceptual and artistic trajectory links Moholy-Nagy’s *Telephone Pictures* and LeWitt’s wall drawings to the 1990s, a decade that witnessed the creation of physical, networked, and online platforms for dialogue and interaction with the public—projects that often invited participants to become the artwork (see, for example, the video productions of Sylvie Blocher [pl. 151], Annika Eriksson, and Phil Collins).

From Ben Vautier (who exhibited himself to the public in *Sculpture vivante* [Living Sculpture, 1962]) to Ben Kinmont (who offered passersby occasions to debate his artistic proposal for *I am for you, Ich bin für Sie* [1990–92]), this trajectory moves us beyond definitions of art and nonart. It took a new generation of artists in the early 1990s—some of them associated with relational aesthetics, a term coined by Nicolas Bourriaud—to review and reformulate notions of open systems and participation that were first introduced in the 1960s. Some were content to stage conceptual gestures as opposed to concrete interventions in the social fabric of the community; others refused a
specific social function for their proposals.\textsuperscript{37} Despite an oft-proclaimed interest in social agendas associated with communal events (as seen in many Rirkrit Tiravanija projects) and in the creation of modular furniture that facilitates undefined gatherings (as in N55’s <em>Hygiene System</em> [1997], Jorge Pardo’s public pavilion for <em>Skulptur Projekte Münster</em> 1997, and c a l c’s <em>DROPone</em> workspace for Michelangelo Pistoletto’s <em>Cittadellarte</em> [1999; fig. 14]), most of these social spaces were confined to the art world. A second aspect is noteworthy: these updates on 1960s strategies rarely make use of today’s networking technologies. They insist instead on a low-tech approach, stressing performative physical events and activities. Many refer back to the modular, precarious objects and installations of Clark and Oiticica, yet strangely ignore precedents such as the conceptual artist Tom Marioni or the activist collectives Ant Farm (see pls. 85–88) and Eventstructure Research Group (fig. 13).\textsuperscript{38}

How, then, can an artwork include not only friends and peers, but also an undefined group of participants? How might the artist address a larger public without becoming simplistic, didactic, or compromised? Harrell Fletcher and Jon Rubin’s <em>Pictures Collected from Museum Visitors’ Wallets</em> (1998; pls. 123–24) started off with a participatory intervention in the museum space, which yielded the final artistic selection. Jochen Gerz, on the other hand, is no longer interested in exhibiting aesthetic choices made alone in the studio. The museum or the public space at large becomes his studio. His project <em>The Gift</em> (2000; pls. 147–50) does not question the “product” as such, but rather the way in which a work that is collaboratively produced, exhibited, and distributed can embody an actual representation of its coproducers. A community of museum visitors is documented in a temporary portrait gallery that is collected onsite but later dispersed throughout the city, region, or beyond. The museum unleashes its own products in a gesture of generosity toward those who were generous enough to contribute their portraits.

A great deal of critical attention has been directed at ways in which artists deal with institutional framing. The practice of institutional critique, as embodied by Haacke and Andrea Fraser (pl. 167), has worked to dissect the power regimes and ideological structures at work in the art world. It is equally interesting, though, to reflect on the public’s use of the museum, whether prompted by an artist (Janet Cardiff’s video walks [pls. 159–66]) or by the audience’s own desires. Despite the structural conditions of the institutional setting—the need to obey the rules of quiet contemplation, not touch the artwork, respect the laws of ownership, etc.—visitors are constantly adopting tactical ways of using the museum. The French critic Michel de Certeau described a range of subjective counterpractices (cunning, tricks, maneuvers) as “weak.” In the museum context,
weak tactics might include drifting through an exhibition, simulating contemplation, or secretly taking pictures: a "fleeting and massive reality of a social activity at play with the order that contains it." It is only through these personalized actions that the museum becomes what de Certeau would call "habitable"—a "space borrowed for a moment by a transient.") Artists such as Erwin Wurm (pls. 141–44) and Martin Walde (fig. 15), far from criticizing strong institutional ties, have successfully developed accessible yet also absurd or even obscure practices involving collaborative, performative actions. In their best moments, these actions transcend readability to posit a profound ambiguity, provoking "weak" responses toward the institution and the production process. By refusing to control such engagement through ubiquitous surveillance policies or, more subtly, to channel specific readings through didactic exhibition paths, a museum that offers open spaces for undefined interactions could radically change our general perception of the institution as an inflexible, deadening container.

Once again, artists have come to consider the museum a terrain for potentially transformative experiences, as Dorner envisioned in the 1920s. They openly address its codified spaces as social sites for singular visitors as well as for communities. Without adhering to a specific political or activist agenda, artists and curators are exploring ways to address social relations beyond the ideological readings of Marxism and critical theory that dominated the discourse of the 1960s and 1970s, most notably expressed in the radical positions of Debord and the Situationists. But it is still an open question whether these practices actually constitute what Bourriaud calls "a social interstice [that] updates Situationism and reconciles it, as far as it is possible, with the
art world.”⁴² Even if artists conceive their works as models for different ways of being together, of working together, of producing together—as playful, temporary interventions that are easily dissolved—they can generate meaningful aesthetic and social experiences without making (micro)utopian claims.

When an artwork is subject to public intervention, it does not necessarily become more interesting or aesthetically charged. What is exhibited is rather the extent to which simple community or antagonistic forces are acted out. The installation 1st Public White Cube (2001; pls. 183–92), by the net art pioneers Blank & Jeron (in collaboration with Gerrit Gohlke), stages precisely this conflict at the center of the museum galleries. It is their contention that museum space and inclusion in exhibitions are for sale—a position that is antagonistic to any curatorial vision. Yet they frame this process, define the situation, and adapt the context to their artistic needs. By the same token, online projects such as Dan Phifer and Mushon Zer-Aviv’s ShiftSpace (2007–present; pl. 174) and Jonah Brucker-Cohen and Mike Bennett’s BumpList: An email community for the determined (2003; pls. 177–78) draw our attention to the distinctive conditions of participation on the internet. Contributions by Antoni Muntadas (pl. 114), Maria Eichhorn (pls. 116–17), Minerva Cuevas (pls. 130–31), and Warren Sack (pl. 155) demonstrate that the potential for global networking does not rule out exclusion and ideological framing.

To say that artists can “fill in the cracks in the social bond” may overemphasize their role, but many practitioners do understand their work as an articulation of social conditions, including “the participation of a multiplicity of voices in the democratic agon, thereby helping to mobilize passions towards democratic objectives.”⁴³ Chantal Mouffe’s philosophical critique of conciliatory notions of community and Jean-Luc Nancy’s insistence on the community as an interruption of singularities (“Community is made of interruption of singularities...community is not the work of singular beings”) make us aware of potential conflicts that may be addressed.⁴⁴ These ideas might inspire administrative and curatorial anxiety, but they should also be understood as possibilities for shaping a more inclusive form of practice. The museum, from this perspective, is no longer a container for art, nor does it manufacture consensual communities. If successful, it becomes a producer of and an arena for social and aesthetic experiences, temporarily interrupting singularities through the presentation of participatory art that actively generates a discursive public space. And as we head back home or to work after visiting the exhibition, this may resonate with us for a time, fostering a desire...

Politics, Participation, and Meaning in the Age of Mass Media
you are the audience
you are my distant audience
I address you
as I would a distant relative

—from *Audience Distant Relative* by
Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1977)

Perception Requires Involvement

—Antoni Muntadas (1999)

As high modernism approached its apotheosis of social disengagement and formal "purity" in the post-World War II work of painters such as Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, the seeds of its demise simultaneously were being sown, most strikingly by Pollock himself. He had already landed a profile in the August 8, 1949, issue of *Life* magazine when Hans Namuth, in 1950, trained his film camera upward at the artist slathering paint from a bucket onto a sheet of glass. The widely seen article, film footage, and stills helped make Pollock not just a well-known artist but also the pop-culture celebrity later dubbed "Jack the Dripper" by *Time* magazine. His fame was heightened by the inclusion of his work in government-sponsored exhibitions abroad, including the 1950 Venice Biennale and United States Information Agency–organized shows intended, in part, to promote America's cultural prowess and propagandize its supposedly unfettered freedom of expression. Pollock's untimely death in 1956—the result of a late-night, perhaps drunken, car crash on Long Island—was seen by some as an analogue to the tragic, romanticized death of the actor James Dean.

Neither the Cold War ideological context into which Pollock's work was thrust nor the media circus that developed around him was of Pollock's making. Both were imposed on the formerly left-leaning painter and his work. Other artists learned quickly from the mediagenic example of Pollock's life and death. His catalytic influence helped shift the global emphasis in art from the object—a representation of experience—to the process of
producing that object. Like Namuth’s film, the resulting theatricalized artistic “event,” or spectacle, proved highly amenable to photographic and mass-media consumption.4

On March 9, 1960, nearly a decade after Pollock’s filmic encounter with Namuth, the artist Yves Klein staged an event in Paris that we might regard today as being primarily about the “buzz.” In front of a small audience of well-heeled patrons at the mainstream Galerie internationale d’art contemporain, the tuxedo-clad artist directed three nude women as they applied blue paint to their bodies and subsequently “blotted” themselves against large sheets of white paper on the floor and walls (see fig. 16). A small orchestra simultaneously played the droning tones (and silences) of Klein’s forty-minute Monotone Symphony. This public introduction of the Anthropométries, as the artist called them, was documented by several filmmakers, photographers, and critics. They helped transform the evening into a succès de scandale, an outcome undoubtedly relished by gallery owner Maurice d’Arquian but probably not very helpful to Klein in his struggle to communicate the complex ideas about body and spirit underlying his art.2 As for the elite audience, its participation was necessary to ensure that the event generated the maximum buzz.

Klein’s elaborate production seems, in retrospect, to symbolize a decade’s experimentation with live art across the globe. In France George Mathieu staged Art Informel painting performances in front of large audiences; in Japan artists belonging to the Gutai group ecstatically transformed themselves into “living paintbrushes” (to use Klein’s term). In the United States John Cage and the Black Mountain group assembled artists of various disciplines to create multimedia events, a practice also explored in Allan Kaprow’s happenings, which presented readings of

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2 Life’s spread also enquired whether Pollock was the greatest living painter in the United States. See "Jackson Pollock," Life, August 8, 1949, 42–43.
3 "The Wild Ones," Time, February 20, 1956, available online at http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,809324-1,00.html. This and all other URLs cited in this essay were accessed December 16, 2007.
4 See Sidra Stich, Yves Klein (Cologne: Museum Ludwig; Stuttgart, Germany: Cantz Verlag, 1994), 188. 5 Klein would become a more serious victim of media calculation when footage from a staged performance of the Anthropométries was reedited by the filmmaker Gualtiero Jacopetti, who transformed the segment from a celebration of art and womanhood into the dark, degrading episode ultimately used in the 1960 film Mondo cane.
fragmentary texts and enactments of everyday activities to audiences charged with moving from place to place during performances (see pls. 9, 28–34). Beginning in 1962, Viennese Actionists such as Günter Brus and Hermann Nitsch incorporated audience members in eroticized, sometimes violent spectacles involving butchered animals, which were darkly evocative of ancient rites.6

Although Pollock and Klein are among the best-known artists of the early postwar era, this essay features other artists both renowned and obscure.7 They range from Christo, celebrated for decades for wrapping or otherwise “framing” far-flung structures and places, including Berlin’s Reichstag and New York’s Central Park, to contemporary groups who tamper with corporate websites or have been vital in combating the inhumanities attendant on the AIDS crisis. Some are not professional artists at all. Each individual or group, however, takes a nontraditional view of the role conventionally played by the audience, thus expanding the nature or meaning of participation in visual art. During the second half of the twentieth century, this frequently transpired in the politicizing glare of mass-media attention at a time when the foundations of our current, media-saturated existence were not only being firmly established, but also beginning to infiltrate every aspect of daily life. As artists became more adept at exploiting media coverage of their work, they also began to produce art that was designed to gain its full meaning from the press’s response to it. This signaled a fundamentally new kind of audience participation and, indeed, a new genre known as media art.

It might be useful at this point to distinguish my use of the term media art from the altogether different understanding of the phrase by many art-world denizens, who use it to describe work created by means of computers or other technological media. The projects under consideration here are usually antiformalist and inhospitable to conventional exhibition formats, sometimes ever-unfinished. They are also typically hybrid in nature and performative in character. (As we have already seen with Pollock and Klein, it is the performative nature of an artist’s practice that can transform the once-meditative process of producing an art object into an electrifying event suitable for photographic and media consumption.) To bring together such work is to map just one heterogeneous realm of practices located within what might be described as the world of art. These practices frequently overlap more fully with those of community-oriented endeavors, or even political and media activism, than with those associated with the professionalized system we call the art world.

Far from the world of art, another phenomenon emerged during the 1960s: television came of age. Six months after Klein performed his Anthropométries in Paris, the
first of four debates between the American presidential candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon—widely credited with deciding the election in favor of the telegenic Kennedy—took place. By the end of the 1960s, happenings pioneer Allan Kaprow publicly wondered how art might compete with the first manned moon landing, perhaps the decade’s most highly mediated event, seen simultaneously on television by tens of millions of people. So potent was the new medium that commentators immediately recognized its ability to knit together a traumatized nation following Kennedy’s assassination on November 23, 1964. A few years later, nervous American politicians and military officials lamented that the Vietnam War was being lost because of the public’s exposure to images that brought home the horrific complexity of the Southeast Asian conflict.

In every sense, experience rather than reflection was the order of the day, and “experience” could now come in the form of televised mass media. For many viewers seeing was believing, and television became Western society’s new witness to history, especially in the hands of the avuncular newscaster Walter Cronkite, who hosted a popular CBS series of the mid-1950s called You Are There. Reenactments of historical events such as the Salem witch trials and the fall of Troy were punctuated by the narrator’s voiceover, “You are there.” The refrain uncannily mirrored the televisual enlargement of the audience to include virtual as well as physical presence.

The rhetoric—rather than the reality—of public ownership of the airwaves is ingrained in the American consciousness. It made access to television distribution both a political issue and a recurrent concern in video art from its inception, perhaps apocryphal, in 1965, when the Fluxus artist Nam June Paik showed his just-made tapes of a papal procession at the Cafe au Go Go in New York. In Franco-era Spain, Antoni Muntadas offered TV watchers the first Spanish alternative to the nationalistic drone and centralized programming of the government-run Televisión Española (TVE). His project Cadaqués Canal Local (1974) brought portable video technology and the community programming it enabled to a small resort town on the Mediterranean, in the process nurturing local political activists by providing them with the means of television production. Similar projects were carried out by Videofreex, which, from 1971 through 1977, operated the longest-running pirate television channel in the United States. Dubbed Lanesville TV for its upstate New York location, it broadcast local news and town hall meetings as well as the more “artistic” output of the ten-member group, and also trained anyone interested in the techniques of television production. These media activists were hardly unique in their willingness to invite audiences to participate in the processes of television production and distribution, especially in the United States.⁸

But was it art? The distinction seemed irrelevant to nascent video artists and curators who, in keeping with the politically expansive times, simply embraced this work as falling within the purview of contemporary visual production. New

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⁸ Other groups involved in such activities included Raindance Corporation, Revolutionary People’s Communication Project, the People’s Video Theater, and Global Village. Their mouthpiece was Radical Software magazine, which was published from 1970 through 1974. See Dara Greenwald, “The Grassroots Video Pioneers,” The Brooklyn Rail (May 2007), http://www.brooklynrail.org/2007/5/express/video.
artistic forms—performance, land, media, information, conceptual, process, and video art—emerged alongside and from the radical political ferment of the 1960s. Novelty and multiplicity were the orders of the day. Political concerns included not just international opposition to the Vietnam War and other late-colonial conflicts, but the very redefinition of politics itself: in identity—rather than class-based terms (e.g., the women’s, gay, and black liberation movements). At the same time, the counterculture flourished and helped set the stage for a new ecology movement whose intentions were signaled by the first Earth Day in 1970.

Contemporary art appeared to bear little resemblance to art of the past. Seemingly anything was fair game with respect to subject matter, content, and approach. Some projects, such as Les Levine’s Canadian-Kosher Restaurant (1969) in New York or Bonnie Ora Sherk’s Crossroads Community (the farm) (1974–80; fig. 17) in San Francisco, seemed to lie entirely outside the bounds of art, forcing their makers’ nearly invisible works to lead double lives: as functioning restaurants or parks in the real world, and as artworks when translated into documentary form in the gallery.\(^9\) Audiences for such works participated directly, if often unwittingly; cognizant visitors were expected to participate actively in the creation of meaning (which was ideally something an audience member arrived at rather than something an artist produced).

For some practitioners, art offered a way of referring directly or indirectly to social conditions or ideologies: by bolstering and promoting political agendas (as did Hans Haacke’s MOMA-Poll [pl. 69], a 1970 poll surveying visitor reaction to New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller’s views on the Vietnam War, or Joseph Beuys’s 1974 founding of the Free International University in Düsseldorf [see pl. 79]); by raising consciousness or offering psychological therapy (the 1970 Feminist Art Program in California or Lygia Clark’s healings in 1970s Brazil); by providing an absurdist alternative to mass-media spectacle (Ant Farm’s Eternal Frame, a 1976 reenactment of the Kennedy assassination, or General Idea’s Miss General Idea pageants); by
pointing to natural history (the subtle reforestations of Alan Sonfist or the reclamation projects of Newton and Helen Mayer Harrison); or by framing more traditional relationships between culture and nature through remotely located installations (the earthworks of Walter De Maria or Robert Smithson). All of these projects offered—indeed, sometimes demanded—unconventional means of experiencing art. Like early postmodernism in architecture, such celebrations of duality and multiplicity mirrored life’s messiness, in contrast to modernism’s reductionism and obsessive attention to so-called purity. This embrace of complexity also represented the undermining of Cold War absolutes as the Vietnam War wore down and finally ended in 1975.

If politics is defined as the relationship between the individual and society, virtually no artwork is without political meaning. Art and propaganda—the most extreme example of the political in visual culture—are part of the same continuum. The inseparable conjoining of art and politics in so-called political art is simply a restatement of the inseparability of form and content in (effective) art. Thus it is axiomatic that bad political art is both bad art and bad politics. As is true with any type of visual production, evaluating politically oriented art demands consideration of both the viewer’s criteria and the creator’s intentions. Surely the work’s power of persuasion is also a relevant factor.

Consider two political artworks that are closer to propaganda than to the depoliticized end of the visual-culture spectrum: Hans Haacke’s Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971 (1971), a muckraking display of charts, texts, and documentary photographs examining a Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum trustee’s real-estate holdings, and Art Rebate / Arte Reembolso (1993; fig. 18), a project for which Elizabeth Sisco, Louis Hock, and David Avalos distributed ten-dollar bills—some of it money from the National Endowment for the Arts—to undocumented workers in San Diego. Thomas Messer, the Guggenheim’s director, shuttered Haacke’s show before it even opened and fired curator Edward Fry for publicly defending it. The activity of Sisco and her cohorts, meanwhile, garnered the anticipated outrage of politicians and pundits. The undocumented workers participated directly in the artwork, while the rest of us participated via the morning paper or evening news. What is remarkable is how profoundly the (sometimes unpredictable) possibilities for artistic interaction with mass media have changed over the decades: from the experience of Klein, whose intentions were obscured by the press, to that of Haacke, whose censorship by the museum was widely reported, and finally to that of Sisco, Hock, and Avalos, who counted on a sensationalistic response from the media to disseminate their artistic/political message.

The Art Rebate project makes it clear that artists can intervene directly in social or political processes. Yet a mere twenty-five years earlier, this sort of intervention was nearly impossible. In the late modernist era, dominated mainly by abstract styles, artists participated in politics only as ordinary citizens, rather than as artist-citizens incorporating political views within their art. Organizations such as the Art Workers' Coalition (1969–71) tended to train their focus on art institutions, protesting the price of admission or the paucity of works by black and female artists at museums such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, while Pop icon Andy Warhol's famous 1972 anti-Nixon print—which features the sinister-looking incumbent above the words Vote McGovern—was simply a campaign fund-raising poster.

Some artists’ forays into the political realm were more whimsical than those of Sisco et al. During the late 1970s, a number of artists assumed performative roles as artist-candidates; these highly unconventional “politicians” simultaneously enacted and subverted thoroughly conventional electoral forms. In 1974 the oft-costumed, tap-dancing Mr. Peanut (aka performance artist Vincent Trasov) ran for mayor in Vancouver, British Columbia. He was publicly endorsed by Beat icon William Burroughs and garnered nearly 2,700 votes, or 3.4 percent of those cast. In 1979 Jello Biafra, lead singer of the punk band Dead Kennedys, vigorously campaigned in the San Francisco mayoralty race and received nearly 6,600 votes (3.5 percent of those cast). Lowell Darling's 1978 performance/media art quest for the California governorship (see fig. 19)—a hard-fought campaign during which he persuaded his opponent, Governor Jerry Brown, to endorse him—garnered 62,000 votes (2 percent of those cast). Audiences participated in these projects just as they participated in the usual rites of electoral
democracy: by attending the candidates’ events, working on their behalf, and, presumably, by voting for them.

The playfulness of these artists’ candidacies draws attention to the fact that political activity in Western society is often regarded as serious, even deadening and alienating, rather than as something that might inform our lives and benefit from our meaningful participation. The notion of the political in art can thus span the spectrum from the whimsical to (far more frequently) the didactic. The artists we tend to think of as political—such as Haacke, Conrad Atkinson, Victor Burgin, Mary Kelly, and Martha Rosler—tend to produce installations with extensive texts that demand viewers’ time and concentration and proffer a clear, usually left-leaning, ideological viewpoint.

The didactic installations of Group Material, on the other hand, embodied a broader emotional range than those of earlier installation artists and employed new paradigms of participatory production. Established in 1979 and housed for a time in an East Village storefront, the collective employed the input and participation—and sometimes even the belongings—of its neighbors to create thoughtful examinations of consumerism, AIDS, and other subjects (see fig. 20). Group Material represents an experimental approach to collaborative art practice that emerged at the end of the 1970s and included other New York groups such as Collaborative Projects, Inc., and Fashion Moda as well as Tim Rollins + K.O.S. (Kids of Survival), a program for Bronx teenagers that Rollins founded in 1984 and eventually evolved into a publicly funded charter school.

Collaboratively produced art can raise complex questions about participation among artists—not just issues of process (Group Material and Tim Rollins + K.O.S. operated by sometimes tortuously arrived-at consensus), but also of credit and ownership. Participation and collaboration are very different conditions, the latter implying shared recognition, the former merely assistance. Collaboration elevates the role of participant to co-creator, as seen in the after-the-fact partnership status that the artists Ed Keinholz, Roy Lichtenstein, and Christo accorded their wives.

Ironically, Christo’s private funding of his large-scale projects through the sale of drawings and collages can seem to epitomize capitalism, at least in contrast with
government and foundation funding of the arts. Yet he is transparent about his use of volunteer labor to actualize his work, providing apparently meaningful participation to unpaid assistants as well as paid employees. His relationship with his volunteers is predicated on barter: in exchange for labor, he offers a sense of inclusion and community in a highly mediated event. The underlying beauty, scope, and mediagenic nature of the work, which is universally regarded as the property and vision of Christo and Jeanne-Claude (who plays coproducer to his director), has made it difficult to resist for even the most begrudging of critics.

Not so for Judy Chicago's Dinner Party (1979; figs. 21–22) and Birth Project (1980–85). Since the mid-1970s, Chicago's feminist oeuvre has attracted a great deal of media attention and utilized the work of volunteers. But unlike Christo's projects, the works' beauty was never a given for art-world commentators. ("Too essentialist! Too crafty! Too vulgar!") were among the epithets leveled at The Dinner Party upon its 1979 debut at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.) The volunteer labor behind The Dinner Party seemed to inspire a diametrically opposed response vis-à-vis Christo's apparently happier workers. Whereas his enterprise was seen as offering conviviality, Chicago's long-in-development projects were regarded as the products of something more like a sweatshop—although she gave her volunteers far more freedom to contribute than Christo ever did. Some viewed Chicago's work as not entirely her own; after 1979 complaints of misattribution and lack of credit arose from within the project, eliciting ire more reminiscent of a Hollywood studio than an artist's atelier.\(^6\)

The election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980 brought with it a conservative backlash that drastically reduced spending on newly established and longstanding cultural programs, including the Neighborhood Arts Program and the art critics' fellowships awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Coincidentally, it also marked the emergence of the AIDS crisis. The onset of AIDS
proved to be a perfect political storm; politicized by a religious right intent on reversing the previous decade’s civil rights gains by lesbians and gay men, mishandled by the slow-to-action federal government, and magnified in intensity by America’s lack of universal health care, it resulted in the transformation of a public-health concern into a contentious matter of personal morality. In contrast to the government’s ineffectual efforts, artists produced highly effective participatory artworks and educational campaigns in response to the epidemic.

Nearly unique to American culture is its traditional marginalization of the arts. (To dismiss this time-honored puritanism and anti-intellectualism as anachronistic is to be capable of imagining the election of a Vaclav Havel or Mario Vargas Llosa to the U.S. presidency.) The American artist’s outsider status—beholden neither to patron nor institutional sponsor—liberated twentieth-century practitioners to pursue virtually any approach, format, or theme imaginable. These factors, in combination with the unhappy spectacle of young friends and acquaintances, artists and dealers, critics and curators dying seemingly unnatural deaths, helped prompt an outpouring of anti-AIDS public art and activism, some of it derived from the influential direct address of street works by artists such as Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer. The AIDS epidemic also yielded two of the most influential media artworks in history: *Silence = Death* and *The Red Ribbon* project. Theorized as conceptual artworks, both were meant to be attached to the garments of audience-participants, although donning them could bring the wearer disapprobation or insult.

*Silence = Death*, the graphic emblem that has become synonymous with ACT UP and AIDS activism, was conceived in 1988 by a group of six anonymous gay men. For the buttons and stickers that bore their defiant message, they inverted the pink triangle that the
Nazis forced homosexuals to wear in concentration camps and printed the injunction Silence = Death in white beneath it. (Gay activists of the 1970s had already appropriated the pink triangle as a symbol of gay liberation.) The Red Ribbon was designed in 1991 by Visual AIDS Artist Caucus as a symbol of commitment to people with AIDS and as a means of acknowledging the AIDS crisis at a time of fearful silence about HIV. It debuted on the televised Tony Award ceremonies in 1991, and by the end of that year it was prominently displayed on lapels at the Emmys and the Oscars, the U.S. Open, Freddie Mercury’s “A Concert for Life” tribute in London, and even on presidential candidate Jerry Brown’s suit jacket. The handlers who removed it from Barbara Bush’s bodice at the 1992 Republican Convention in Houston feared its apparently subversive political message, but by then The Red Ribbon—like any successful media artwork—had already begun to assume a life of its own. In some communities it remains a vital conversation starter; in others it is merely an outdated fashion accessory.

One of the high-water marks of participation in recent art is The NAMES Project AIDS Quilt, often known simply as The AIDS Quilt and now trademarked as The AIDS Memorial Quilt (figs. 23–24). Organized in San Francisco in 1986 by the activist Cleve Jones and now headquartered in Atlanta, it is that rare phenomenon in contemporary culture, a genuine community artwork with no initial connections to professional artists, galleries, or art institutions. Contributions to The AIDS Memorial Quilt are democratically evaluated according only to standards of size (each must measure three by six feet) and durability. The now-gigantic work comprises more than forty-six thousand quilted, appliquéd, and collaged rectangles commemorating more than 17 percent of American AIDS deaths—ordinary citizens as well as celebrated public figures such as Arthur Ashe, Rock Hudson, and Michel Foucault. In 1988 the quilt adorned the cover of People magazine; a year later it was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. This work of community craft had morphed, as The Red Ribbon would a few years later, into the media artwork of its moment. In both cases, as with Silence = Death, the message is primarily political: a call for discussion and social responsibility. Confrontational, ACT UP–style direct action, however, remains the leading model of (embodied) political activism (see fig. 25)—evidence of which was on view at the January 2007 meeting of the World Social
Forum in Nairobi, where a demonstrator protested against “Big Pharma” with an obviously ACT UP-inspired placard that read You Get Rich / We Die. It is worth emphasizing that both tactics emerged prior to the onset of ubiquitous electronic communication, a fact that renders the accomplishment even more noteworthy.

Today, by contrast, electronic mass media proffer a stay-at-home model of globally oriented entertainment and political involvement that renders the two nearly indistinguishable. Antithetical to traditional notions of community and direct action, new media-style audience participation invariably involves acts performed in solitude. Little, after all, separates voting for a favorite contestant on American Idol from pledging dollars to the Democratic or Republic National Committees online.\(^{20}\) Not much time or effort is required for either.

Online art, which came into its own after the 1994 release of the browser software necessary to navigate the World Wide Web, can offer an alternative to media couch-potato-ism. One early trend in online art was the utilization of the database, which employs the computer’s stellar capability for crunching information and making it accessible. Among the earliest such works is Muntadas’s The File Room (1994–present), at http://www.thefileroom.org. A fully interactive, ever-expanding database documenting nearly one thousand cases of social and cultural censorship contributed by approximately twenty-five hundred daily visitors, it spans three thousand years and most of the globe.\(^{21}\) The archive categorizes incidents of censorship by geographical location, date, medium, and grounds for censorship (including nudity, religious rationale, and sexual/gender orientation), and it is likely to remind audiences of the priority of culture in determining the nature of censorious activity. Harking back to so-called information art and the conceptualism of the 1970s, Muntadas has referred to The File Room—à la Joseph Beuys—as a “social sculpture” that “gains its meaning through a group effort of individuals, organizations, and institutions.”\(^{22}\)

A less collaborative approach, fully grounded in the ethos of contemporary culture, is the “tactical media” advocated by the anarchist Hakim Bey. A favorite slogan of tactical activists is “Don’t hate the media, become the media”—a strategy taken up by an American collective, the Yes Men, in 2004. On the twentieth anniversary of the Bhopal Disaster, which killed thousands in India, a group member appeared on the BBC as a Dow Chemical Company spokesman, announcing that the company would accept all responsibility for

\(^{20}\) In fact, during a sort of ongoing telethon in spring 2007, viewers of American Idol had, by May 3, contributed more than $70 million to alleviate poverty in Africa and in Hurricane Katrina–afflicted areas of the United States. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idol_Gives_Back. \(^{21}\) Visitor statistics provided in an email to the author on February 22, 2006, from Svetlana Mirtehcheva of the National Coalition Against Censorship, which hosts The File Room on its server. The File Room can also take the form of a physical installation; see pl. 334.

\(^{22}\) Antoni Muntadas, email to the author, March 16, 2006.
the damages, while a fake Dow website, located at a real-sounding URL, announced precisely the opposite. A second television appearance by the phony spokesman created further confusion, ensuring major press coverage of the gaffes and drawing increased attention to the tragedy of 1984. The group has wreaked similar havoc on the World Trade Organization and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 2006 a Yes Men member appeared in New Orleans posing as a HUD representative, promising to reopen public housing facilities that had closed following Hurricane Katrina and announcing that the major oil companies would donate money to rebuild damaged levees.23

For most teenagers and young adults today, participation in mass media comprises membership in online social networking communities such as MySpace or Facebook, which have come to be known more generally as Web 2.0. These free sites offer little in the way of meaningful social involvement along the lines of contributions made to projects such as The AIDS Memorial Quilt or The File Room. Due to its uncensored, entirely elective nature, participation in the new mass media has acquired an undeserved patina of democracy and ideological neutrality. Although some (small) percentage of content posted by artists and other individuals to MySpace or YouTube is undoubtedly intellectually stimulating or politically progressive, those sites are gigantic databases that can only reflect the outlooks, concerns, and prejudices of their users. The video footage on YouTube is not merely pluralistic; it encompasses postings that can only be described as virulently misogynistic, racist, or homophobic. The shock of seeing, for example, an apparent church choir singing about the need to eliminate homosexuals is only compounded by a list of links to other virulently antigay footage available to site visitors.

Although we can hardly blame the software for its ersatz value neutrality—that is, its refusal to distinguish between the rhetoric of the neo-Nazi and the freedom fighter in Sudan—we can blame the sites' corporate owners for their lassitude in confronting the ethical implications of their hands-off attitude toward posted content. Indeed, what seems a simple issue—should reprehensibly racist, homophobic, or misogynistic footage be contextualized or characterized in any way by those responsible for its potentially widespread distribution?—is in fact extraordinarily complex. The problem is, of course, legal as well as ethical. Unfortunately, court rulings have not kept pace with new technologies, nor have they tended to conform to one another. The American courts’ tendency to consider anything posted online as published, in the journalistic sense, is inadequate given the impossibility of monitoring millions of daily postings. The European courts’ tendency, on the other hand, to comply with the European Union’s stringent antihate speech laws has hardly proved up to the task of obviating so-called socially unacceptable speech.

What has all this got to do with art? At the most basic level, as mentioned above, artists interested in mass media have already begun to produce works for YouTube

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and other new-media venues, just as they have created projects for eBay, the online auction site. But in a larger sense, in a world riven by ideological and values-oriented strife, the suffocating expansion of mass media raises complementary issues about the value and place of art and about the political and ethical roles artists and art institutions see themselves playing in twenty-first-century society.

As mass media encroaches on virtually every aspect of personal and social life, participation now seems no more complicated than owning—or having access to—a modern-equipped computer. Whereas post–World War II existential angst derived largely from the psychic inability of many to participate in what seemed a murderous society, today there exist no psychological barriers to social participation. The paralysis of existential man has evolved into the highly individuated indifference, or channeled automatism, of postmodern human. A recent and deceptively simple gesture by Muntadas—a text work reading Warning: Perception Requires Involvement, translated into more than a half-dozen languages (see figs. 26–27)—suggests a paradoxically sincere and ironic answer to the ever-present question of how the individual might participate in art or society. The artist implies that there is plenty for viewers to see and learn, but that something is demanded of them as well: they must engage critically. How else to struggle against the ideologically predigested perspectives of mass media and institutions? How else to keep alive the possibility of agency—of acting rather than being acted upon—in the face of all-encompassing postmodern culture? Participation per se can be taken for granted in the media-entertainment state. If art is to continue to matter, artists must not only provide alternative ways of participating, but also of cultivating critical perspectives that ensure the possibility of individual and collective engagement in an age when the meaning of both are tortuously twisted by the forces of global capital.
ART AFTER WEB 3.0
The explosion of user-created content (sometimes referred to as participatory or social media) on the web since 2005 has unleashed a new media universe. On a practical level, this was made possible by the convergence of free web platforms, inexpensive software that enables people to share their own media and access materials produced by others, the rapid fall in prices for professional-quality media-capture devices such as high-definition video cameras, and the addition of camera and video features to mobile phones. Importantly, however, this universe is not simply a scaled-up version of twentieth-century media culture. Instead, we have moved into the new realm of social media. What does this shift mean for the ways in which media function and the terms we use to talk about them? And what does the exponential rise in the number of people who are able to produce, remix, and share media—often with skills equal to those of professionally trained artists—mean for the practice of art? These are the questions with which this essay will engage.

Social media are often discussed today in relation to Web 2.0, a term coined by Tim O'Reilly in 2004. Web 2.0 refers to a number of technical, economic, and social developments: besides social media, other important related concepts are user-generated content, network as platform, folksonomy, syndication, and mass collaboration. I will not summarize all of these here—Wikipedia, which is itself a great example of Web 2.0, does
this better than I ever could. My goal is not to provide a detailed analysis of the social and cultural effects of Web 2.0; rather, I would like to put forward a few questions and make a few points related to video and moving-image cultures on the web, with particular attention to their effect on professional art practice.

To get the discussion started, consider two principal tendencies of Web 2.0. First, in the present decade we have seen a gradual shift from a majority of internet users accessing content produced by a much smaller number of professional producers to a growing number of users accessing content produced by other nonprofessionals. Second, if the web of the 1990s was primarily a publishing medium, in the 2000s it has increasingly became a communication medium. Communication between users, including conversations around user-generated content, can take place in a variety of forms besides email, including “posts, comments, reviews, ratings, gestures and tokens, votes, links, badges, video.”

What do these trends mean for culture in general and professional art practice in particular? First of all, it does not mean that every user has become a producer. According to 2007 statistics, only between 0.5 and 1.5 percent of users of the most popular social media sites (Flickr, YouTube, and Wikipedia) contributed content. Others remained consumers of content produced by this tiny cohort. Does this imply that professionally produced content continues to dominate people’s sources of news and media? If by content we mean typical twentieth-century mass media—news, television shows, narrative films and videos, computer games, literature, and music—then the answer is often yes. For instance, in 2007 only two blogs made it into the list of the hundred most-read news sources. Yet at the same time we have seen the emergence of the so-called long tail phenomenon, which refers to the fact that most of the content available online—including that produced by nonprofessionals—succeeds in finding an audience. These audiences may be tiny but they do exist. In the mid-2000s, for example, every track out of a million or so available through iTunes sold at least once per quarter. In other words, every track—no matter how obscure—found at least one listener. This translates into a new economics of media. As researchers who have studied the long tail have demonstrated, in many industries the total volume of sales generated by low-popularity items exceeds the volume generated by the top forty.

Let us now consider another set of statistics showing that people are increasingly getting their information from social media sites. In January 2008 Wikipedia ranked as the ninth most-visited website; Facebook was at five, and MySpace was at three. According to the company that collects these statistics, it is more than likely that these numbers are U.S.-biased, and that the rankings in other countries are different. However, a general

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1. See Adrian Chan, “Social Media: Paradigm Shift?,” http://www.gravity7.com/paradigm_shift_1.html. Unless otherwise noted, this and all other URLs cited in this essay were accessed February 11, 2008.
2. My descriptions throughout of interfaces, features, and common uses of social media sites also derive from early 2008; many details will surely have changed by the time you read this book.
3. Ibid.
trend toward the increased use of social media sites—global and local—can be observed in most countries.

The number of people participating in social networks, sharing media, and creating user-generated content is astonishing—at least from the perspective of early 2008. (In 2012 or 2018 it may seem trivial in comparison to what will be happening then.) MySpace, for example, claims 300 million users. Cyworld, a Korean site similar to MySpace: 90 percent of South Koreans in their twenties and 25 percent of that country’s total population (as of 2006). Hi5, a leading social media site in Central America: 100 million users. Facebook: 14 million photo uploads daily. The number of new videos uploaded to YouTube every twenty-four hours: 65,000 (as of July 2006).\(^6\)

If these numbers seem amazing, consider a relatively new platform for media production and consumption: the mobile phone. In early 2007, 2.2 billion people had cell phones; by the end of 2008 this number is expected to be 3 billion. Obviously, people in an Indian village sharing one mobile phone are probably not making video blogs for global consumption—but this is today. Note the following trend: in mid-2007 Flickr contained approximately 600 million images. By November 2007 this number had more than tripled.\(^7\)

These statistics are impressive, but how should they be interpreted? They do not tell us about users’ actual media diets, which obviously vary between places and demographics. For instance, we do not have exact numbers (at least, they are not freely available) regarding what people watch on sites such as YouTube: the percentage of user-generated content versus commercial
content such as music videos, anime, game trailers, and movie clips. We also do not have exact figures regarding the percentage of people’s daily information intake that comes from nonprofessional sources versus big news organizations, television, and commercially realized films and music.

These numbers are difficult to establish today because commercial information and media not only arrive via traditional channels such as newspapers, TV stations, and movie theaters, but also via the same channels that carry user-generated content: blogs, RSS feeds, Facebook posted items and notes, YouTube videos, and so forth. Simply counting how many people follow a particular communication channel is no longer an accurate way to gauge what they are watching. Yet even if we did have precise statistics, they would still not clarify the roles of commercial sources and user-produced content in forming people’s understanding of the world, themselves, and others. More precisely, what are the relative weights of ideas expressed in large-circulation media and alternatives available elsewhere? If one person gets all her news via blogs, does this automatically mean that her understanding of world issues is different from that of someone who only reads mainstream newspapers?

The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life: Tactics as Strategies

For a variety of reasons, the media, business, consumer electronics and web industries, and academics have all converged to celebrate content created and exchanged by users. In academic discussions, in particular, disproportional attention is given to genres such as youth media, activist media, and political mashups, which are indeed important but do not represent the typical usage of hundreds of millions of people.

In celebrating user-generated content and implicitly equating it with all that is alternative and progressive, academic discussions often avoid asking certain basic critical questions. For instance, to what extent is the phenomenon of user-generated content driven by the consumer electronics industry (the producers of digital cameras, video cameras, music players, laptops, and so on)? To what extent is this phenomenon also driven by social media companies (which, after all, are in the business of getting as much traffic to their sites as possible so they can make money by selling advertising and usage data)?

This leads to another question: given that a significant percentage of user-generated content either follows templates and conventions established by the professional entertainment industry or directly reuses professionally produced content (for instance, anime...
music videos), does this mean that people's identities and imagination are now even more firmly colonized by commercial media than in the twentieth century? In other words, is the replacement of the mass consumption of commercial culture by users' mass production of cultural objects a progressive development? Or does it merely constitute a further stage in the evolution of the culture industry? If twentieth-century subjects simply consumed the products of the culture industry, twenty-first-century "prosumers" and "pro-ams" are passionately imitating it, creating their own cultural products that follow templates established by professionals and/or rely on professional content.

The case in point is anime music videos (often termed AMV). A search for this phrase on YouTube on May 4, 2008, returned 280,000 results. AnimeMusicVideos.org, the main web portal for AMV makers before the action moved to YouTube, contained 130,510 videos as of February 9, 2008. AMV are made by fans who edit together clips from one or more anime series and put them to music, which generally comes from sources such as professional music videos. Some AMV also use footage from video games. In the last few years AMV makers have started to add visual effects available in software such as Adobe After Effects. But regardless of the particular sources and combinations, the majority of AMV feature video and music drawn from commercial media products. AMV makers see themselves as editors who rework others' material rather than as filmmakers or animators who create from scratch.  

To help us analyze AMV culture, let us put to work the categories set up by Michel de Certeau in his 1980 book *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau makes a distinction between the "strategies" used by institutions and power structures and the "tactics" used by modern subjects in their everyday lives. Tactics are ways in which individuals negotiate strategies that were set for them. For instance, to take one example discussed by de Certeau, a city's layout, signage, driving and parking rules, and official maps are strategies created by the government and corporations. The ways an individual moves through the city—taking shortcuts, wandering aimlessly, or navigating favorite routes—are tactics. In other words, an individual cannot
physically reorganize the city, but she can adapt it to her needs by choosing how to negotiate it. A tactic “expects to have to work on things in order to make them its own, or to make them ‘habitable.”'

In modern societies, as de Certeau points out, most of the objects that people use in everyday life are mass-produced goods; these goods are expressions of the strategies of designers, producers, and marketers. People build their identities and populate their worlds with these readily available objects using different tactics: bricolage, assembly, customization, and—to use a term that was not a part of de Certeau’s vocabulary but has become important in the 1990s—remix. For instance, people rarely wear outfits in which every piece is by a single designer, as in fashion shows; they usually mix and match different pieces from different sources. They also wear clothing in ways that the designers may not have intended, and they customize the clothing with buttons, belts, and other accessories. The same goes for the ways in which people decorate their living spaces, prepare meals, and construct their lifestyles in general.

The Practice of Everyday Life offers an excellent intellectual paradigm for thinking about vernacular culture, but we have witnessed many significant changes since the book was published in the early 1980s. These changes are not drastic in the area of governance, though even there we have seen moves toward more transparency and visibility. In the sphere of the consumer economy, however, the changes have been quite substantial. Strategies and tactics are now often linked closely in an interactive relationship, and their features are frequently reversed. This is particularly true of “born digital” industries and media such as software, computer games, websites, and social networks. Such products are explicitly designed to be customized by users. Consider, for instance, the original graphical user interface, popularized by Apple’s Macintosh in 1984, which allowed users to customize the appearance and functions of the computer and its applications to their liking. The same applies to recent web interfaces—iGoogle, for instance, which allows the user to set up a custom home page by selecting from many applications and information sources. Facebook, Flickr, Google, and other social media companies encourage others to write mashup applications that repurpose their data and add new services (as of early 2008, Facebook hosted more than 15,000 applications written by outside developers). The explicit strategy of customization is not limited to the web; many computer games, for example, now ship with a level

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(accessed February 8, 2008).
editor that allows users to create their own playing levels.

Although industries dealing with the physical world are moving much more slowly, they are on the same trajectory. In 2003, for instance, Toyota introduced the Scion automobile, the marketing of which centered on the idea of extensive customization. Nike, Adidas, and Puma have all experimented with allowing consumers to design their own shoes by choosing from a broad range of parts. (In the case of Puma’s Mongolian Barbeque concept, a few thousand unique shoes can be constructed.) In early 2008 Bug Labs introduced what they called “the Lego of gadgets”: an open-source consumer electronics platform consisting of a minicomputer and modules such as a digital camera and an LCD screen. The recent celebration of DIY practice in various consumer industries is another example of this growing trend. To revisit the terms set out by de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, these companies’ new strategies mimic the tactics of bricolage and reassembly. In other words, the logic of tactics has now become the logic of strategies.

The Web 2.0 paradigm represents the most dramatic reconfiguration to date of the relationship between tactics and strategies. According to de Certeau, tactics do not necessarily result in objects or anything stable or permanent. As summarized by Wikipedia, “Unlike the strategy, [the tactic] lacks the centralised structure and permanence that would enable it to set itself up as a competitor to some other entity.... It renders its own activities an ‘unmappable’ form of subversion.” Since the 1980s, however, the consumer and culture industries have systematically turned every subculture (particularly youth subcultures) into product. In short, cultural tactics evolved by individuals are sold back to them as strategies. If you want to oppose the mainstream, you now have plenty of “oppositional” lifestyles—with every subcultural nuance, from music and visual styles to clothes and slang—available for purchase.

These adaptations, however, still tend to focus on distinct subcultures: bohemian, hip-hop, rap, rock, punk, skinhead, goth, etc. But in the 2000s the transformation of people’s tactics into corporate strategies began to take a new direction.

The developments of the previous decade—the web platform, the dramatically decreased cost of consumer devices for media capture and playback, the increase in global travel, and the growing consumer economies of many countries—led to an explosion of user-generated content available in digital form: websites, blogs, discussion forums, maps,
digital photos, video, and music. Responding to this turn of events, Web 2.0 companies created powerful platforms designed to host all this content. MySpace, Facebook, Orkut, LiveJournal, Blogger, Flickr, YouTube, hi5, Cyworld, Wretch, Baidu, and thousands of other social media sites make such content instantly available worldwide (except, of course, in countries that block or filter them). These platforms do not just reveal the particular features of individual subcultures, but also make public details of the everyday lives of hundreds of millions of people who make and upload media or text.

What was once ephemeral, transient, untraceable, and invisible has thus become permanent, mappable, and viewable. Social media platforms give users unlimited storage and plenty of tools to organize, promote, and broadcast their thoughts, opinions, behavior, and media to others. You can already directly stream video using your laptop or mobile phone, and it is only a matter of time before the constant broadcasting of one’s life becomes as common as email. If you follow the evolution from the MyLifeBits project (2001) to Slife software (2007) and Yahoo! Live’s personal broadcasting service (2008), the trajectory toward the ongoing capture and dissemination of everyday life is clear.

According to de Certeau’s analysis, a tactic can easily break up and regroup. In contrast, strategies are slow to change. The strategies used by social media companies today, however, do the exact opposite: they are designed to be flexible and they continually change. (Of course, all businesses in the age of globalization have had to become adaptable, mobile, and ready to break up and regroup, but they rarely achieve the flexibility of web companies and developers.) According to Tim O’Reilly, one important feature of Web 2.0 applications is “design for hackability” and remixability.”

Most major Web 2.0 companies—including Amazon, eBay, Flickr, Google, Microsoft, Yahoo!, and YouTube—thus make available their programming interfaces and some of their data to encourage others to create their own applications.

Today, in sum, the strategies used by social media companies can often look like tactics, while tactics can look like strategies. Since the companies that create social media platforms make money from luring as many as visitors as possible (thereby serving advertisements, selling add-on services, and gathering usage data to sell to other companies), they have a direct interest in having users pour as much of their lives into these platforms as possible. Consequently, they give users the ability to customize their online lives (for instance, by controlling what is seen by whom) and to expand the functionality of the platforms themselves.

This, however, does not mean strategies and tactics have completely changed places. If we look at the actual media content produced by users, the relationship between the two remains unchanged. As mentioned above, for many decades companies

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have been turning the elements of various subcultures into commercial products. But these subcultures are rarely developed completely from scratch—they are themselves the result of individuals' appropriation or remix of earlier commercial cultures. AMV subculture is a case in point. On the one hand, it exemplifies the new strategies-as-tactics phenomenon: AMV are hosted on mainstream social media sites such as YouTube, so they are not exactly transient or unmappable (you can search them, see how other users rated them, and so forth). On the other hand, on the level of content, the great majority of AMV consist of passages lifted from commercial anime and music. This does not mean that AMV are not creative or original, only that their creativity is different from the romantic/modernist model of making something new. To use de Certeau’s terms, AMV represent a form of tactical creativity that works to make things habitable.

Conversations through Media

Thus far I have discussed social media using familiar terminology. However, the very terms I have most frequently invoked—content, cultural production, and cultural consumption—are themselves being redefined by Web 2.0 practices. Today we are seeing new kinds of communication in which content, opinion, and conversation often cannot be clearly separated. Blogging is a good example, since many entries are copied by blog writers from other sources and then commented upon. Consider also online forums or the comments below website entries: the original posts may generate long discussions that go in new directions, with the first items long forgotten.

Often the words content, news, and media function as tokens to initiate or maintain conversations. I am thinking here of people posting pictures on one another’s MySpace pages or exchanging gifts on Facebook. What kind of gift you get is less important than the act of getting a gift, or that of posting a comment or a picture. Although it may appear that such conversations simply foreground communicative functions that the linguist Roman Jakobson described as emotive or phatic, detailed analysis may reveal them to be a genuinely new phenomenon.

The beginnings of such analysis can be found in the work of the social media designer Adrian Chan. As he points out, “All cultures practice the exchange of tokens that bear and carry meanings, communicate interest and count as personal and social transactions.” Token gestures “cue, signal, indicate users’ interests in one another.” While the use of tokens is not unique to social media, some of the features Chan points out do indeed appear to be new. For instance, he notes that the use of tokens is often “accompanied by ambiguity of intent and motive (the token’s meaning may be codified while the user’s motive for using it may not). This can

\[\text{20} \] A very interesting feature in Wired described a creative relationship between commercial manga publishers and fans in Japan. The story quotes Keiji Takeda, one of the main organizers of Japanese fan conventions, as saying, “[The convention floor is where we’re finding the next generation of authors. The publishers understand the value of not destroying that.]” Daniel H. Pink, “Japan, Ink,” Wired 15, no. 11 (November 2007): 216–33, available online at http://www.wired.com/techbiz/media/magazine/15.11/ff_manga?currentPage=3.

double up the meaning of interaction and communication, allowing the recipients of tokens to respond to the token or to the user behind its use.”

Another novel communication situation involves conversations around a piece of media—for instance, comments added by users beneath a Flickr photo or a YouTube video that respond not only to the media object but also to one another.\(^2\) Such conversation structures are also common in real life: think of a typical discussion in a graduate film studies class, for instance. However, web infrastructure and software allow these conversations to be distributed in space and time—people can respond to one another regardless of their respective locations, and the conversation can, in theory, go on forever. (The web is, in fact, millions of such conversations taking place at the same time.) These conversations are quite common: according to a 2007 report of the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 89 percent of American teenagers who post pictures online reported that people comment on their photos at least some of the time.\(^3\)

Equally interesting are conversations that take place through images or video—for instance, responding to a video with another video. This is, in fact, a standard feature of the YouTube interface.\(^4\) Social media sites contain countless examples of conversations through media, but for me the most interesting case so far is the five-minute theoretical video *Web 2.0…the Machine Is Us/ing Us*, posted by the cultural anthropologist Michael Wesch on January 31, 2007.\(^5\) As of May 12, 2008, this video had been watched 5,371,859 times. It had also generated twenty-eight video responses ranging from short, thirty-second comments to long, equally theoretical, and carefully crafted videos.

As is the case with any other feature of contemporary digital culture, it is possible to find precedents for all of these communication situations. For instance, modern art may be understood as conversations between different artists or artistic schools. That is, one artist/movement is responding to work produced earlier by another artist/movement. Thus Modernism reacted to classical nineteenth-century culture, Jasper Johns and other Pop artists to Abstract Expressionism, Jean-Luc Godard to Hollywood-style narrative cinema, and so on. To use the terms of YouTube, we might say that Godard posted a video response to one huge clip called “classical narrative cinema.” But the Hollywood studios did not respond—at least not for another thirty years.

As can be seen from these examples, conversations between artists and movements were typically not true conversations. One artist/school produced something, another artist/school made something in response, and that was all. The first artist/school usually did not react in turn. Beginning in the 1980s, however, professional media practices begin to respond to one another more quickly, and the conversations were no


\(^3\) According to a survey conducted in 2007, 13 percent of internet users who watch videos also post comments about them. See Pew Internet and American Life Project, “Reports: Technology and Media Use,” July 25, 2007, http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/226/report_display.asp. Of course, it is not just videos that inspire commentary, reviews, and discussions; the media object in question might be software, a photograph, or a previously posted comment. The Pew statistics, unfortunately, do not tell how many comments are responses to other comments.


\(^5\) The phenomenon of conversation through media was first pointed out in 2006 by Derek Lomas in relation to comments on MySpace pages. See http://youtube.com/watch?v=6gmFankOEiE (accessed May 12, 2008).
longer one-way. Music videos influence the editing strategies of feature film and television; similarly, the aesthetics of motion graphics are now slipping into other narratives. Cinematography, for example, a discipline that once applied only to film, has been taken up by the video game industry. Such conversations are still different, however, than communications between individuals in networked environments that take place through media. In the latter case, it is individuals rather than professional cultural producers who are exchanging media messages, and the exchange can happen within hours.

Is Art after Web 2.0 Still Possible?

Have professional artists (including video and media artists) benefited from the explosion of online content and the easy availability of media publishing platforms? Does the fact that we now have platforms where anyone can publish videos and charge for downloads mean that artists have new distribution channels for their work? Or has professional art become irrelevant in the world of social media, where hundreds of millions of people upload and download video, audio, and photographs daily; content produced by an unknown author may be downloaded millions of times; and media objects move fluently and rapidly between users, devices, contexts, and networks? Modern artists have thus far succeeded in meeting the challenges of each generation of media technology, but can professional art survive the extreme democratization of media production and access?

On one level this question is meaningless. Never in the history of modern art has it done so well commercially. No longer a pursuit for the few, contemporary art has become yet another form of mass culture. Today its popularity often rivals that of other mass media. Most importantly, contemporary art has become a legitimate investment category; with all the money invested in this market, it is unlikely that it will ever collapse entirely. (Of course, history has repeatedly shown that even the most stable political regimes do eventually fail.)

Since the beginning of globalization, the institution of contemporary art has experienced a level of growth that parallels the rise of social media in the 2000s. Ever more countries have joined the global world and adopted Western values in their cultural politics—including the support, collection, and promotion of contemporary art. By 2004, for example, Shanghai had not one but three museums of contemporary art, plus more large spaces for showing recent
work than New York or London. “Starchitects” such as Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid are now building museums and cultural centers on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. Rem Koolhaas is building a new museum of contemporary art in Riga, Latvia. The list continues, but you get the idea.

In the case of social media, the unprecedented growth in the number of people uploading and viewing one another’s media has led to a lot of innovation. Although the typical video diary or anime on YouTube may not be that special, enough are. In fact, in nearly every medium in which the technologies of production have been democratized (including video, music, animation, and graphic design), I have encountered many projects that not only rival those produced by the best-known commercial companies and professional artists, but also often explore new areas not yet touched on by those with more symbolic capital.

Who is doing these projects? In my observations, while some do come from prosumers, pro-ams, and other amateurs, most are done by young professionals or professionals in training (i.e., students). The emergence of the internet as the standard communication medium of the 1990s means that in most cultural fields today, nearly every company, regardless of size or geographic location, has a web presence and posts new work online. Perhaps more importantly, students can now put their projects before a global audience, see what others are doing, and work together to develop new tools (see, for example, the Processing.org community).

We are not talking about “classical” social media produced by the general public and uploaded to YouTube and Flickr. At least at present, many such portfolios, sample projects, and demo reels produced by young designers and students are being uploaded to specialized aggregation sites known to people in relevant fields. By way of example, sites that I consult regularly include xplsv.tv (motion graphics and animation), Coroflot (design portfolios from around the world), Archinect (projects by architecture students), and Infoethics (information visualization projects). In my view a significant percentage of the work found on these websites represents the most innovative cultural production today. At very least, they make it clear that the world of professional art does not have exclusive license to creativity and innovation.

Perhaps, however, the most sophisticated forms of conceptual innovation may be linked to the development of Web 2.0 itself—namely, the new creative software tools (web mashups, Firefox plugins, Facebook applications, etc.) designed by individuals and small collectives as well as large companies such as Google. Ultimately, social media’s true challenge to art may not be the excellent cultural production of students and nonprofessionals that is now readily available online. It may lie in the very dynamics of Web 2.0 culture: its incessant innovation, energy, and unpredictability.
JOHN CAGE

I was intent on making something that didn’t tell people what to do. —John Cage

4'33" (1952) is a composition of silence lasting four minutes and thirty-three seconds. Without instrumentation, the score highlights ambient sounds surrounding the performance: noises in the environment and those produced by the audience. Having decided there is no such thing as absolute silence, Cage chose to define it as the absence of intentional sound. In this he was influenced not only by avant-garde composition and Surrealism, but also by Eastern philosophy and Zen Buddhism. Indeterminacy, chance, and nonlinear progression became integral to the structure of his music. By scoring silence, Cage sought to open his listeners to divine influences, making music a process of discovery rather than one of forced communication.

As a teacher at Black Mountain College, Cage became familiar with Robert Rauschenberg’s White Paintings (see pl. 4) the year before composing 4'33". According to Cage, the paintings—blank panels of white oil on canvas—were not just objects, but also "ways of seeing... airports for shadows and for dust, but you could also say that they were mirrors of the air." They inspired him to compose a silent work, so that music could "catch up" to painting.

4'33" premiered at the Benefit Artists Welfare Fund concert in Woodstock, New York, in August 1952; it was performed by David Tudor, a pianist who also taught at Black Mountain College. Tudor used the original manuscript (now lost), written in conventional grand staff notation and containing empty measures in three movements. Tudor later reconstructed two versions according to his recollection of the original score (see pl. 1). The Irwin Kremen manuscript (1953; pl. 2) represents a graphic departure. Each movement is laid out in "proportional notation": as a timeline in which an eighth of an inch equals one second. Visually, this version appears remarkably similar to Rauschenberg’s White Paintings. The score constructs a time within which to hear chance sounds, just as the White Paintings provide a reflective space in which to observe fleeting images. Video documentation of Cage performing the work survives in Nam June Paik’s A Tribute to John Cage (1973/1976; pl. 3), in which the composer sits at a grand piano in Boston’s Harvard Square, and in Henning Lohner’s 4'33" in Berlin (with John Cage), raw material video pictures cat. # 001 (1990), filmed amid the rubble of the Berlin Wall. —MP
60 \text{ bpm} = 2\frac{1}{2} \text{ cwp.}
\frac{4}{4}
\frac{1}{8}, \frac{1}{4}, \frac{3}{8}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{5}{8}, \frac{3}{4}, \frac{7}{8}, 1
Robert Rauschenberg. *White Painting (Three Panel)* 1951
Oil on canvas / 72 x 108 in. / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, purchased through a gift of Phyllis Wattis

Rauschenberg created *White Painting (Three Panel)* as a student at Black Mountain College. He later noted that his painting instructor, Josef Albers, taught him "such respect for all colors that it took years before I could use more than two colors at once." Avoiding color, content, and narrative, Rauschenberg chose to paint in white in order to avoid imposing his own preferences and refrain from subordinating one color to another. —MP

GEORGE BRECHT

Chance was important to Brecht even before he attended John Cage’s experimental composition course at the New School for Social Research, New York, in 1958–59. Earlier in the decade he would roll a sheet into a ball, spray it with water and ink, and call the result “a painting made by chance.” Brecht and Cage shared a belief in using chance as an operation, thereby tapping into the forces of nature and the objective universe and making the invisible observable. Brecht was a chemist before he became an artist; he believed art and science were both tools, intimately related to each other as ways to understand nature and humanity.

Cage’s class led to what Brecht and his Fluxus contemporaries were best known for: an emphasis on the event. They made scores for performances, directions to guide individual or group activities. Through such events Brecht aimed to reveal the patterns and interconnected relationships in all aspects of life. His first solo exhibition, Toward Events (1959; pl. 6), involved a unique game of solitaire and the audience’s interaction with objects in a case, a dome, and a cabinet.

Beginning in 1959, Brecht made approximately a hundred event scores that were published in a box called Water Yam (1963; pl. 8). They were small white cards with black type, some bearing a few words or bulleted instructions. For Brecht, an event addressed a field of phenomena, with dissimilar elements timed to take place simultaneously courtesy of the participants. What occurred during the event was the function of Brecht’s score and the participants’ interpretations of the text. Merely reading the score, he claimed, represented a performance. The intention was to undermine his own authorship; the viewer became a collaborator capable of deciding how to interpret the artist’s instructions. “It’s just to see what happens when things come together,” he noted. “The research comes into the making of them, and once they’re made, the research continues in the process of discovering how people interact with them; how I interact with them.” —MP
THE CASE is found on a table. It is approached by one to several people and opened.
The contents are removed and used in ways appropriate to their nature.
The case is repacked and closed.
The event (which lasts possibly 10-30 minutes) comprises all sensible occurrences between approach and abandonment of the case.

THE DOMINO STANDS on a cloth set for the array of its contents. This array accomplished, necessary actions taken, the pieces are returned to their places.

THE CABINET.

SOLITAIRE 1 is played with a unique set of 27 cards based on the variables number, size, and color. Each card carries one of three values for each of the variables {1, 2, or 3; large, medium, or small; black, white, or brown}. Choose a single "effective variable". Mix the deck and deal three cards in a row. If two or more have the same value of the effective variable, move the other upon the one at the left. Continue dealing the whole deck by rows of three upon the previous piles and spaces. Move cards from right to left whenever they can be matched in value. These moves are made only with individual cards, not with piles. When the deck is exhausted, pick up piles in the same order as dealt, turn them over to form a new hand, and deal again by threes. Whenever three cards of the same value appear one at the top of each pile, discard them from the pack. The game is won if all nine threes of a kind are so discarded. Continue redealing the pack without limit until the game is won or reaches impassé.
Universal Machine 1965 / MAT MOT
edition: cloth-covered box, offset lithography, glass, buttons, stainless-steel ball bearing, balsa wood, wood toothpicks, glass beads, metal hook and eye, brass washer, and iron snap clamp, ed. 75/100 / 11 × 11 × 1¾ in. / The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit & Water Yam 1965 /
Fluxus edition: wood and Masonite box and offset lithography / 9¾ × 8½ × 1¼ in. / The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit
Allan Kaprow was John Cage's student at the New School for Social Research, New York, when he began working on what he later called "the first proto-happenings." He coined the term happening in a 1958 essay on the painter Jackson Pollock (he chose it as a neutral name for an event or performance). For Words, Kaprow created an environment using random text gathered from publications. He hung two rolls of cloth covered with words side by side, inviting visitors to manipulate them and generate new phrases. He also stapled hundreds of words to the gallery walls and a central pillar, encouraging viewers to remove and reposition the text. — MP
ANDY WARHOL

In the early 1960s Warhol developed his signature Pop aesthetic, adopting an iconography of industrially produced images and a formula of monotony and repetition. His paintings of Campbell's soup cans and newspaper headlines and his drawings of dollar bills were still "original" artworks, objects that were unique rather than reproduced through printing, film, or video. However, his Do It Yourself series, produced around 1962, functioned as a test ground for a new concept of authorship. The compositions are clearly derived from how-to books and paint-by-number hobby kits containing pigments and outlined scenes on canvas board—the specific domain of children and amateur painters. In these canvases and drawings, generic painterly motifs such as flowers, landscapes, and sailboats are only partially filled out, as if the artist had abandoned the idea halfway through the project. One could also, however, read this as the moment in which just enough pigment had been applied to establish a pattern of corresponding colors and numbers. From here on, it is implied, anybody could potentially fill in the details and complete the work. As the artist bluntly commented, always playfully burnishing his Pop image: "I think somebody should be able to do all my paintings for me.... I think it would be so great if more people took up silk screens so that no one would know whether my picture was mine or somebody else's." In other words, he would be happy for anything that looked like a Warhol, even if it were not, to be attributed to him. Artworks such as the Do It Yourself drawing of flowers (pl. 10) and Dance Diagram—Tango (both 1962) were not meant to implicate the audience as active participants in his production, as did contemporary projects by the members of Fluxus. Instead they sought to profit from a kind of division of labor, enlisting others to work toward the mass production of Warhol images. Such projects prefigure the artist's later film work with the Factory, which significantly extended his interest in anonymous authorship and collective production. —RF
Dan Graham

Schema
1966
Printed matter / Courtesy the artist

Graham's series of Schemes, begun in 1966, are among the earliest examples
of conceptual art. The artist conceived these schematic poems as generators
of text to be realized by collaborators and editors at magazines and publishing
houses. The Schemes are a typical example: a score devised for mass
production and distribution via print. "Systems of information (in-formation)
exist halfway between material and concept, without being either one," asserted
Graham in 1969. The resulting texts, which approximate our contemporary
notion of software and code, were published in Aspen magazine in 1967 and
later in magazines such as Emissary, Art-Language, Interfunktionen, Studio
International, and Flash Art. —RF
Vostell started involving participants in his actions as one of the founding members of the Fluxus movement in Germany. His signature was not only to engage and activate his audiences, but also to shock them—an attempt to let disparate elements collide. His praxis of "decollage"—Vostell's term for a destructive but also constructive artistic position—included instructional pieces such as his first happening in Paris, Petit Ceinture (Small Loop, 1962); altered television sets such as TV Dé-collage (1963); and a range of sculptural and graphic elements. Do it yourself (1963) invited the public to reuse the New York Times as an artistic material by reducing it to pulp in a blender and adding perfume and sneeze powder. He employed smoke bombs in his most notorious happening, You—A Decollage Happening (pl. 12), realized on Long Island, New York, on April 19, 1964, with the help of his friend Allan Kaprow. Though it was performed in the United States, You was influenced by a German aesthetic still trying to come to terms with the trauma of the Holocaust and World War II. The event score (pl. 13), which Vostell called a "psychogram," took a newspaper clipping on the wartime death of two Polish partisans as a point of departure. The happening involved a series of staged actions at a variety of sites, including an empty white swimming pool, where participants were asked to use revolvers to shoot paint at one another while piling up to form a heap of "corpses." They then crawled along a length of barbed wire to a tennis court and an area with burning TV sets, to be watched while wearing gas masks. At one point, as they passed a stinking horse stable, a loudspeaker addressed the participants: "You, you." The stage direction, however, countered the chaotic action, instructing participants to "Try to be the most friendly to everybody." The event asked a lot from those who decided to participate, but also from those who just stood by and watched. The spectacle involved all of the senses, and it concluded with an "action-lecture" in which the audience was free to join in by humming. All of Vostell's happenings shared a sense of absurdity, physical extremes, and an often monumental scale. You in particular succeeded as a satire on the absurdity of life and the atrocities of war. —RF
Joseph Beuys, Razon Brock, Rolf Jährling, Ute Klophaus, Charlotte Moorman, Nam June Paik, Eckart Rahn, Tomas Schmit, and Wolf Vostell 24-Stunden (24 Hours) 1965
Catalogue of a happening at Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany, 1965 / Offset lithography, plastic, and flour / 4¼ x 3 x 2 in. / Special Collections, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Research Library

Masterminded by Beuys, the action 24-Stunden (24 Hours) took place on June 5, 1965, at Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal, Germany, from midnight to midnight. It included simultaneous Fluxus activities by Brock, Paik, Moorman (who performed in her transparent plastic dress), Schmit, Vostell (who performed a cycle of seventeen actions), and Paik’s Robot K-456 (pl. 26), the first nonhuman “action artist.”

The catalogue, published soon afterward by Hansen & Hansen, documents the events and includes, in a cavity cut into the interior pages, a small plastic bag filled with flour (the raw material for one of Vostell’s contributions: “Occupy yourself for 24 hours with flour and illustrations. Cover the photos with flour and only let the smile of a face shine through”). —RF
In the late 1950s John Cage taught a series of courses on experimental composition at the New School for Social Research, New York. Attended by artists such as Allan Kaprow, George Brecht, and Yoko Ono, the classes laid the foundation for the Fluxus movement by encouraging a younger generation of practitioners to use chance in their work.

Most active between 1962 and 1978, Fluxus emerged as a loose, international association of artists working in a wide range of media, including musical scores, performances, events, publications, and multiples. The name derived from the dictionary definition of flux, implying change, flow, and indeterminacy. At one time or another, Fluxus artists working individually and collectively under the Fluxus banner included Brecht, Ono, Ay-oh, Robert Filliou, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, George Maciunas, Charlotte Moorman, Nam June Paik, Mieko Shiomi, Daniel Spoerri, Ben Vautier, Wolf Vostell, and La Monte Young. They hailed from America, Japan, Korea, and several European countries, including Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, and Sweden.

Informally structured, the group comprised writers, musicians, and artists who did not define themselves as part of a strict movement. Instead, as Brecht described it, “Each of us had his own ideas about what Fluxus was and so much the better… For me, Fluxus was a group of people who got along with each other and who were interested in each other’s work and personality.” In spirit Fluxus was antibourgeois, antiart, and rebellious against Modernism, the movement that dominated high art of the late 1940s to the early 1960s. Like Dada and Surrealism, Fluxus questioned the value of art and the artist, finding precedent in Marcel Duchamp’s readymade objects and in Cage’s advocacy of chance and indeterminacy. Fluxus artists consciously incorporated audience participation and life itself into their work.

Maciunas designed or produced components of many of the collective’s object-based “anthologies.” One such example is Fluxkit (1965–66; pls. 15–16), a vinyl attaché case housing multiples by various artists. In the late 1960s Maciunas assembled three versions, with silk-screened labels of his own design, that contained between twenty and forty items by other Fluxus artists. Many include versions of Brecht’s Water Yam (1963; pl. 8) along with event scores, texts, and “Fluxbox” games or puzzles (significant in the Fluxus repertoire because they are innately playful and encourage interaction).—MP
Joseph Beuys Intuition 1968 / Wood, graphite, and metal staples / 12% x 8% x 2% in. / Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Alfred and Marie Greisinger Collection, T. R. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1992 at Beuys signing Intuition boxes at his studio, Düsseldorf, Germany, ca. 1968–69

Between 1968 and 1983, in association with Wolfgang Fedlisch’s Vice-Versand Editions, Beuys produced approximately twelve thousand wooden boxes, each with the word intuition penciled inside. Displaying variation in timber and nails, the boxes were meant to be filled by their owners with intuition and new meaning on a daily basis. In 1972 Beuys signed copies in front of the Staatliche Kunsthakademie Düsseldorf, Germany, as a form of political protest. Having been dismissed from his post as professor of sculpture, he resumed his classes in front of the academy and used the boxes to disseminate his plea for a new role for art outside the institutional context.—MP
MIEKO SHIOMI

Shiomi (also known as Chieko Shiomi) studied music and musical theory in Japan; in 1960 she cofounded, with Takehisa Kosugi and others, the avant-garde Ongaku (Music) group. Shiomi and her colleagues were familiar with the work of John Cage, La Monte Young, and George Brecht, and she took a particular interest in Brecht’s events, adopting his term to describe some of her own projects. George Maciunas invited her to collaborate with Fluxus, and in 1964 she lived in New York and participated in Fluxus events. After returning to Japan in 1965, she remained an international Fluxus member, and working remotely she made use of the post.

Shiomi began Spatial Poems in 1965; the nine separately scored events took place over the course of a decade. The work was text-, object-, and action-based. To initiate each project she mailed notes to artists around the world, asking them to participate in an event and send documentation back to her. She pinned the results like flags on a map of the world, marking each event in a geographical context. Shiomi’s interest in using the earth as a stage echoes the thinking of Cage and Brecht, both of whom aimed, through their work, to tap into nature, the universe, and life itself. Spatial Poem No. 1 (1965; pls. 19–20), a “word event,” asked participants to write a word on a card and place it anywhere in the world. Collaborators included Nam June Paik, who considered writing “sweet salt” but decided not to, “since there is no such thing.” Alison Knowles described dropping a red feather, labeled “feather,” from a fire escape. The wind deposited the feather on Broadway and Canal Streets; after landing in a grate it disappeared. Daniel Isaac Spoerri chose the word “merde,” which he left in room 13 at the Hotel Carcassonne, 24 rue Mouffetard, Paris. –MP.

\# Score for Spatial Poem No. 1 1965 / Letterpress / 3 x 6 in. / The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit

\# Spatial Poem No. 1 1965 / Fluxus edition: stenciled map on painted composition board, masking tape, pins, and offset lithography / 11 ½ x 18 x ¾ in. / The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit

A SERIES OF SPATIAL POEMS

No. 1

Write a word (or words) on the enclosed card and place it somewhere.

Let me know your word and place so that I can make a distribution chart of them on a world map, which will be sent to every participant.

Chieko Shiomi
In the late 1960s Johnson became disenchanted with painting and began to make mail art instead. These collages (turn-up photographs and drawings with handwritten instructions) were mailed to a growing and fluid network of artists and friends. He asked that recipients change and add to his letters before sending them back to him or forwarding them on to others. Over the years thousands of pieces of mail art were sent across the globe. —MP
Though marketed to the masses, television, for Paik, did not live up to its full potential for audience participation and two-way communication. The Korean-born artist’s interactive intentions radically reconfigured television’s sculptural form and reprogrammed its content. Arguably the founding father of video art, Paik began experimenting with the new medium in the 1960s with a series of manipulated televisions designed to be played like instruments. His first solo exhibition, *Exposition of Electronic Music—Electronic Television* (1963) at Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal, Germany, featured two major bodies of work: sound objects and prepared televisions that drew on his musical education and performance activity as a member of Fluxus.

By speaking into the integrated microphone of *Participation TV* (1963; pl. 23), the viewer creates a voice-generated television image—unpredictable explosions of lines—as acoustic signals feed through an amplifier and into the monitor. The artist also experimented with substituting normal broadcast imagery for abstract visual patterns. The electromagnetically distorted images of *Magnet TV* (1965; pl. 22) informed his 1969–70 invention (with Shuya Abe) of the Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer, a tool he used to make endless variations of vibrantly colored forms in his videotapes. With Abe, Paik created the remote-controlled *Robot K-456* (1964; pl. 26), which synthesized his interest in performance and media. Paik’s interest in chance imagery and his indeterminist work principle was also evident in his expanded cinema masterpiece *Zen for Film* (1964). A visual nod to John Cage’s silent composition *4’33”* (1952; pls. 1–3), the work involved the projection of clear film leader. The blank projection exposed the presence of dust particles in the environment as well as the silhouetted form of any individual positioned between the projector and screen. Cage’s musical aesthetic of a democratization of sounds was a significant influence on Paik’s investigations of an open form of music through which listeners become actors. For instance, the Wuppertal exhibition included *Random Access* (1963; pls. 24–25), in which the participant could perform an unconventional composition by running the sound head from a tape recorder over multiple strips of prerecorded audiotape. Paik’s innovative use of media was thus characterized not only by technological achievement, but also by the guiding principle of user interaction. —TZ
Max Neuhaus  
*Public Supply* I 1966  
Network communication project in New York, 1966  
*Courtesy the artist*

Sound art pioneer Neuhaus demonstrated how the existing networks of telephone and radio could be used for artistic ends. His project *Public Supply* I enabled people calling New York's WBAI radio station to contribute sounds to an aural network. Using his own technology, Neuhaus mixed the incoming calls at the studio, including feedback produced by listeners turning on their radios, and broadcast this material live as a sonic collage. For the artist, the result was not about "a musical product to be listened to, but forming a dialogue, a dialogue without language, a sound dialogue." —TZ
Kaprow not only staged the first happening in 1958, he was also among the first artists to actively involve the audience in his work. A Kaprow project might ask participants to contribute text to the walls of an installation or move furniture around a room (see pls. 9, 28). With Hello (pls. 29–34) he brought his event-based strategies to public television in the form of a "telehappening." In 1969 David Atwood and Fred Barzyk, producers at WGBH Boston, invited Kaprow and five other artists—Nam June Paik, Otto Piene, James Seawright, Thomas Tadlock, and Aldo Tambellini—to investigate the new medium of video as part of the program The Medium Is the Medium.

Kaprow's segment linked four sites in Boston (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a hospital, an educational videotape library, and Boston Airport) via monitors, facilitating communication between the remote locations. A group of people at the studio watched the jumble of monitors, calling out to familiar faces. At the WGBH studio, engineers in the control room were assigned to switch the audio and video signals at random so that the collaborators were only in partial and brief contact with one another. Kaprow recounts:

Most of the participants were friends or their children at the school. A few didn't know everybody and tried to become acquainted by this curious means. We called out, often in vain, Hello! Hello! Bob! I see you! I hear you but I don't see you now! Bob! Bob? The people gestured wildly as if this would bring their friends to them.... It was all very human and very silly. At the end when the equipment was shut off one by one, a lone participant kept speaking out to no one, finally drifted into monologue and said goodbye to himself.

The artist likened his project to a picture telephone (the phone, unlike video, being a familiar personal and social medium at that time), and it clearly anticipated the video-conferencing technology that is prevalent today. The segment that aired for WGBH was in fact a small model experiment for a larger project that Kaprow acknowledged was unfeasible. This concept included a global network of simultaneously transmitting and receiving TV arcades, each equipped with more than a hundred different monitors and open twenty-four hours a day. —TZ

Minujín examined group behavior in social situations through a series of works in the 1960s. Exploiting the conventions of the cocktail party, the Argentinean artist organized four successive evening gatherings in Manhattan, inviting 320 people affiliated by profession: artists, economists, politicians, and fashion industry professionals. Eight representatives of each group were moved to an adjoining room, a sensorial environment influenced by the light shows of the era. Recorded footage of the parties and light shows were later projected in a gallery and experienced by the same guests. — 72
I began with geometry but I was looking for an organic space where one could enter the painting. —Lygia Clark

Even in her early career, in her paintings of the late 1950s, Clark strived to convey a sense of space and movement, evoking a dialectical relationship between viewer and picture. Her sculptural series of the 1960s, Bichos (Animals), required still more from the spectator. They were composed of hinged movable plates, rectangular or circular in shape or a combination of both. Clark likened the hinges to spines, and she thought of the sculptures as organic entities. The structure of the plates and spine determine the possible positions of a Bicho, but its ultimate form depends upon its manipulation by the spectator. The artist called this interaction “a type of body-to-body relationship between two living organisms.”

Clark’s later work progressed to a form of body art. After a wrist injury, she removed the plastic bag that protected her cast from humidity, filled it with air, used an elastic band to close it off, and pressed a stone against it to experience the play of pressure. Clark called this her “first experiment” and the ensuing artworks “propositions” in order to counter the notion of a passive art object. She wanted to create material with which to experience the body, to force the spectator “to rediscover the meaning of our routine gestures.” Designed to be explored by two people together, Clark’s Dialogues involve objects and materials that she modified to create fractured perceptions. Diálogo: Óculos (Dialogue: Goggles, 1968; pl. 41), for example, is a set of two attached goggles that uses mirrors to fragment the wearers’ vision. Diálogo de mãos (Hand Dialogue, 1966; pl. 42) is an elastic Möbius strip that is worn on the hands of two participants. The dialogue is not between viewer and work, but rather between the participants as they bind their hands together with the strip. The same concept is explored at larger scale in Rede de elástico (Elastic Net, 1973; pls. 36–39), which transforms the familiar form of a net into an open structure and an undefined situation: how the elastic is used depends entirely on the dynamics of the participants. Other propositions include elements that are more obviously therapeutic. Clark’s relational objects of the 1970s, for instance, created relaxing situations for the participants or “subjects” using items such as pillows, mattresses, blankets, and small stones. —MP
Máscaras sensoriais (Sensorial Masks)
1967 / Installation view at Paço Imperial,
Rio de Janeiro, 1966 / Cloth masks with
ear devices and goggles, fabric, metal, seeds,
plastic, polystyrene, mirrors, glass, shells,
steel wool, sponge, and tissue / Each: approx.
25% × 39% × 4% in. / Clark Family Collection,
Rio de Janeiro / Diálogo: Óculos (Dialogue: Goggles) 1968 / Modified diving goggles,
metal, and mirror / 5 × 7 × 11½ in. / Clark
Family Collection, Rio de Janeiro / Diálogo
de mãos (Hand Dialogue) 1966 / Installation
view in Rio de Janeiro, 1973 / Elastic / 6½ ×
¾ in. / Clark Family Collection, Rio de Janeiro
Like his fellow Brazilian Lygia Clark, Oiticica dismissed art objects in favor of art experiences. For his 1969 Whitechapel Experiment he created a campus, or floor plan, of multisensory encounters that he called Eden. The installation invited visitors to experience his idea of "creleisure": a neologism combining creation and leisure. People were asked to take off their shoes before entering large boxes filled with sand and straw or cabinlike structures with mattresses and blankets. Multilevel like bunkbeds, Nests was a cluster of cells divided by filmy curtains, to be climbed into and inhabited by visitors. —MP
Performers sit on stage with pair of scissors placed in front of them. It is announced that members of the audience may come on stage—one at a time—to cut a small piece of the performer's clothing to take with them. Performer remains motionless throughout the piece. Piece ends at the performer's option. —Yoko Ono, instructions for Cut Piece (1964)

The aesthetic of Fluxus, particularly the incorporation of everyday activity and audience input to determine artistic content, was crucial to Ono's performances, events, and other projects. She was an early and active member of Fluxus in New York, hosting a concert series from December 1960 to June 1961 at her Chambers Street loft that helped launch the movement. Her solo work included concerts involving the performance of commonplace activities, rhythmic background sounds, and atonal wailing, all intended to facilitate an understanding of perception and encourage “introspective meditation.”

Ono premiered Cut Piece in 1964 at Yamaichi Concert Hall in Kyoto (pl. 47) and performed it again in 1965 at Carnegie Hall in New York (pl. 45). In both versions Ono sat onstage wearing an expensive suit. Audience members cut off pieces of her clothes and undergarments until she was left nearly nude. The event was inspired by a Buddhist allegory in which Buddha sacrifices himself and enters a state of supreme awareness. Ono considered allowing the audience to cut off her clothes to be a Buddha-like gift. In the act of cutting, volunteers entered an exchange with the artist as the vulnerable “object.” Other members of the audience participated in this exchange as voyeurs, witnessing the atmosphere of discomfort. Tensions arose during the performances, and there were moments of potential aggression, but Ono also recalls that “there were quiet and beautiful silences—quiet and beautiful movements.”

In 2003 Ono reprised the piece at Théâtre le Ranelagh in Paris (pl. 46). This time, however, her printed statement asked the audience to “Come and cut a piece of my clothing wherever you like, the size of less than a postcard, and send it to the one you love.” In the decades since its inception, the work had evolved from an exploration of violence to an expression of kindness and peace. —MP
Dressed only in pants, I was lying on a table inside a freight elevator with the door closed. Next to me on the table was a small dish of #18 steel push pins. Lisa beer requested a volunteer from the audience, and he was escorted to the elevator. As the door opened, a camera framing me from the waist up was turned on, and the audience viewed this scene on several monitors placed near the elevator. As the elevator went to the basement and returned, Lisa told the audience that a sign in the elevator instructed the volunteer to "Please push pins into my body." The volunteer stuck 4 pins into my stomach and 1 pin into my foot during the elevator trip. When the elevator returned to the floor, the door opened, the volunteer stepped out, and the camera was turned off. The elevator returned to the basement.

The screening takes place in the dark as usual: except that the movie room has shrunk a little. It only has room for two hands. In order to see the film, which in this case means to sense and feel it, the “spectator” (consumer) has to put both hands through the entrance to the movie house. —VALIE EXPORT

Strapped to the artist’s bare torso, a curtained box—a miniature movie theater—becomes the site for direct contact between performer and audience. In 1968, offering her breasts as the screen, EXPORT created TAPP- und TASTKINO (TAP and TOUCH CINEMA, pls. 49–50), which she referred to as the first genuine women’s film. Demonstrating the agency of a woman to control the viewing context and display of the female body, this example of her work in expanded cinema counters the objectification of women in film. As a feminist action, it also confronted taboos related to codes of sexuality, attempting to liberate and socialize the physical experience of the body. The private act of engaging in voyeuristic fantasy at the cinema became public when enacted before a crowd. Participants faced the awkward experience of touching a stranger’s body while simultaneously looking directly at her indifferent face.

EXPORT premiered the piece with an introductory statement on November 11, 1968, at the Maraisiade "Junger Film 68" festival in Vienna. A legendary second performance (pictured here) was held on November 14 on the Stachus square in Munich. There, acting as sideshow barker, collaborator Peter Weibel solicited both men and women to "visit" the cinema for up to twelve seconds. The artist’s cloth-curtained Styrofoam box was too fragile to use after the first three performances; she wore a longer, more protruding aluminum version (designed by Wolfgang Ernst for the Underground Explosion festival) for the remaining performances, including a September 12, 1969, action performed (again with Weibel) in Munich’s Stachus for broadcast by the Austrian public television station ORF.

From 1969 through 1971 EXPORT toured her mobile cinema throughout Europe. Several of the performances provoked hostile reactions. Police banned a performance scheduled for Stuttgart because of a riot that broke out in Essen, during which EXPORT sustained a head injury. A 1971 Cologne performance by Erika Mies (with EXPORT on megaphone) particularly angered the audience, which took the artists for prostitutes. —TZ
Niki de Saint-Phalle, Jean Tinguely, and Per Olof Ultvedt
*Hon: en Katedral* 1966 / Installation view at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1966 / Metal, wire, fabric, and paint / 246 × 1,131 × 360 in. / Courtesy the Niki Charitable Art Foundation

Saint-Phalle collaborated with Tinguely and Ultvedt on the enormous sculptural installation *Hon: en Katedral*. Returning to the proverbial place of origin, spectators passed between the legs and into the womb of a brightly colored reclining woman. One of a series of female figures Saint-Phalle called Nanas, the ninety-foot-long sculpture housed a variety of social spaces: a milk bar, a planetarium, an aquarium, a movie theater, and an art gallery of forged modern masterpieces. —72
We are standing naked in the main entrance of the museum, facing each other. The public entering the museum has to pass sideways through the small space between us. Each person passing has to choose which one of us to face. — Abramović/Ulay

From 1976 to 1988 the Netherlands-based Marina Abramović and Ulay collaborated on numerous performances. In one of them, recorded on video in 1977 at the Galleria Communale d’Arte Moderna in Bologna, Italy, the naked duo flanked the entrance, an unavoidable obstacle for visitors to negotiate if they wanted to access the museum. Although the public could not avoid physical contact, they clearly tried to maintain some distance by not making eye contact (see pls. 52–55). Once inside, visitors discovered they had been filmed by a hidden camera and were confronted by the following wall text: “Imponderable. Such imponderable human factors as one’s aesthetic sensitivity / the overriding importance of imponderables in determining human contact.” Though the artists intended the performance to last for three hours, the police ended the controversial event after ninety minutes. The resulting video, titled *Imponderabilia*, centers on the visitors’ reactions and reflects the artists’ longstanding interest in the body, gender, and interpersonal relationships.

 Abramović’s solo performances pushed the boundaries of performer-audience interaction and physical vulnerability. In the infamous endurance work *Rhythm 0* (1974; pl. 56), a sign on the wall invited the audience to do whatever they wanted to the artist’s body using any of the seventy-two items (a fountain pen, a rose, a knife, scissors) she had provided on a table. The performance offered a fascinating study of social behavior; the audience’s aggressive actions escalated over the course of six hours, during which Abramović’s clothes were cut off, her body sliced with razors, and a loaded gun held to her head until another audience member wrested it away. — TZ
In contrast to the violence of Marina Abramović’s Rhythm 0 and other endurance performances of the 1970s, Smith’s Feed Me proposed pleasure and required that the audience negotiate with the artist as to the nature of their private interaction. Over the course of one night (April 20, 1973), as part of the San Francisco Museum of Conceptual Art’s All Night Sculpture series, the predominantly male visitors entered a room one at a time, encountering the naked artist and a looped recording that insisted that they feed her. Smith, seated on a divan, surrounded herself with food, beverages, body oils, and perfumes, allowing conversation and affection as nourishment.
The performance *Proximity Piece* (pls. 58–59) unfolded over fifty-two days during the 1970 exhibition *Software* at the Jewish Museum, New York. Acconci chose random museum visitors to follow through the exhibition galleries, sneaking up on them and invading their personal space. He indirectly affected their movements, as many turned away from the man standing too close. Given the subtlety of the intervention, the viewing public was often unaware that an artwork was taking place and they were part of it. In Acconci's photographic documentation, individuals are framed with the artist as both appear to look at art objects. *Proximity Piece* effectively merges the real space of the museum (the viewing context) with the production of the artwork.

Acconci had previously used the strategy of randomly tracking strangers in *Following Piece* (1969; pl. 60), in which he trailed passersby on the streets until they entered private places. The act of following could last minutes or hours and, like *Proximity Piece*, relied on the anonymity of the artist in relation to the public. Acconci carried out the performance every day for a month, sending a description of each pursuit to a different member of the art community. His type-written accounts and photographs constituted an essential part of the artwork: the activities of outsiders as reported back to insiders. Both works relied on the participation of people who had not agreed to take part and did not even know they were involved.

Though Acconci remained silent during these performances, language is central to the work as disseminated and displayed. He frequently probes the dynamic with his audiences by foregrounding spoken language, specifically fantasy. In the best-known example, *Seedbed* (1972), visitors overheard the artist as he masturbated in a concealed space below the floorboards. In *35 Approaches* (1970) the artist mailed daily letters addressing a specific imagined recipient: “You in the blue dress: (or, You in the orange pants:) / I want you. / I am enclosing a gift, a sample from my body, as an introduction and a token of my availability.” Acconci has continually blurred the boundary between his private sphere and the public domain of the art venue, as when he delivered the contents of his apartment to a gallery or rerouted his mail to be delivered to a museum and guarded as art objects. —TZ
PROXIMITY PIECE:
Notes 1970

Performance as operational mode: preference pattern of the opponent (utility function).

* Performer as regulator/performer as conformer

* Performance as double assessment: A's assessment of the situation when B tries to penetrate that assessment (A knowing, all the while, that it has as one of its features the fact that B will try to penetrate it). (A performance can consist of a series of conditional avowals, where one performer will pursue a given course of action if the other party engages, or does not engage, in another course of action.)

* Moving, (Intransitive: clear space.)
Moving into something - which becomes, inevitably, 'moving something.' (Transitive: cluttered space.)
Performance as loss of focus (we're too close to each other to focus on each other): Performance as blur ('Get your face out of my face' - 'He shook his fist in my face' - he can't face me, he can only feel me as the space he's been forced into).

* Flexibility/Rigidity.
Availability/Virtual Indifference.
Saturation/Insufficiency.

* Tenacious performance (I'm clinging to the viewer, I won't lose the viewer, the viewer can't move away.)
Elastic performance (I'm moving with the viewer as the viewer shifts around, I'm bending with the viewer in order to keep at the viewer).
Self-determinative performance (My decision is to make my place: the viewer is incidental, the viewer happens to be in the way).
(Or vice-versa: 'The viewer clings to me, the viewer won't lose me...')


'Performing a person' by bringing that person to a finished state (closing the person in, forcing the person to stay where he/she is, as he/she is).
'Performing a person' by accomplishing that person (becoming that person, playing that person's role as he/she moves out of his/her role and I stay in).

PROXIMITY PIECE:
Additional Notes 1972

Reasons to move: move to a point, move in order to make a still point (if someone is there, I have to keep that person from getting away from the point, missing the point.)
Piper’s *Catalysis* was a series of conceptual performances in Manhattan that violated social norms of public behavior. The resulting photographs document the artist wearing a WET PAINT sign in a crowded street, stuffing her mouth with a towel on public transportation, wearing smelly clothes inside a store, and playing a recording of belching sounds inside a library. Piper never announced that she was performing; unlike televised pranks, the interventions offered no moment of revelation for the strangers who witnessed her behavior. By escaping the confines of the art context, Piper risked appearing repellent, if not crazy. Acting as a catalytic agent for chance reactions, she dissolved the boundary between art and life. —72
In 1970 Baldessari decided to come to terms with his artistic past and make a fresh start by burning most of his unsold paintings created prior to 1966. Called *Cremation Project*, the ritual act took place in a crematorium. Baldessari documented the destruction photographically, complementing the pictures with a bronze plaque bearing his name and the dates May 1953 and March 1966, along with an ash-filled urn. The year 1966 marked the moment at which, seeking a new form for his work, he had started to paint "nothing." Instead of approaching subjects pictorially, he began painting text: simple black words on standard white or gray canvas. Drawing on his pedagogical background and sense of humor, he frequently depicted clichés on how to make art and achieve success. In an interview Baldessari stated, "I was weary of doing relational painting and began wondering if straight information would serve. I sought to use language not as a visual element but as something to read. That is, a notebook entry about painting could replace the painting."

Baldessari’s text paintings are semiotic investigations, games in which the words themselves are not important. They are tautological: the words bring to mind images and the images lead back to words, information, or thought. In making them, Baldessari acted as a strategist or, in his own words, as a producer: he purchased the canvases already prepared, devised the text or appropriated excerpts from previously published books, and hired professional sign painters to produce the finished works. One example, *A Painting That Is Its Own Documentation* (1968) begins: "JUNE 19, 1968 IDEA CONCEIVED AT 10:25 A.M. NATIONAL CITY, CALIF. BY JOHN BALDESSARI." The text continues with details of the painting’s making and provenance (the list of exhibitions and dates includes a presentation at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1990) and expands to fill additional canvases as the documentation grows. In *Terms Most Useful in Describing Creative Works of Art* (1966–68; pl. 62), Baldessari offers fifty-odd words for the reader to consider, from "GIVE VISION" to "AROUSE," "CRITICIZE," and "IMPART." —MP
TERMS MOST USEFUL IN DESCRIBING CREATIVE WORKS OF ART:

- Give vision
- Direction
- Flavor
- A new slant
- Force
- Uniqueness
- Permanence
- Inspiration
- A glow
- Motivation
- Enchantment
- Blend
- Enlighten
- Invigorate
- Enthrall
- Take seriously
- Precise care
- Out of the ordinary
- Enjoy
- Charm
- Influence
- Interest
- Delight
- Arouse
- Communicate
- Cultivate
- Nurture
- Plan intelligently
- Detach
- Transfer
- Challenge
- Elevate
- Satiate
- Improve
- Value
- Flagrance
- Discipline
- Delicate
- Command attention
- Exalt
- Develop
- Satisfy
- Beautify
- Identify
- Inspire
- Originate
- Create
- Associate
- Cherish
- Alter
- Revise
- Criticize
- Impress
- Impart

Douglas Huebler Variable Piece
No. 44 1973 / Photographs and printed text mounted on board / 18 × 24¾ in. / Tate, London, purchased 1974.

Huebler's Variable Piece No. 44 began in 1971 as an edition of 100, a work "in process" to last ten years. Huebler asked the owner of each edition to have a photograph taken of his face and sent to the owners of the previous and subsequent edition numbers. Over time the chain broke down and commitments went unfulfilled. In 1981, in order to finalize the work, Huebler contacted the owners again, asking them to send recent and old photos of themselves. Having received responses from about a third of the owners, he declared the project completed to his satisfaction, as it turned out to be an accurate reflection of the process. —MP.
Since the mid-1960s Graham has produced a body of work that functions as a sustained phenomenological inquiry into architectural space and time. *Performer/Audience/Mirror* (1977; pl. 64) investigates the nature of perception and participation. In the video documentation of his performance at Video Free America in San Francisco, we see the artist standing in front of a silent, seated audience with a mirrored wall behind him. His improvised, continuous observations and interpretations of his and the crowd's physical movements articulate the cycles of awareness occurring within his own consciousness and between himself and his viewers. The piece proceeds through four basic stages: Graham faces the audience and describes his external features and behavior; he describes the audience's external appearance and behavior; he turns to face the mirror, moving about as he describes himself again; and then he describes the audience as he sees it reversed in the mirror. The mirror serves to diminish the boundary between performer and audience as the group collectively becomes conscious of their own bodies and of the performance context. The piece emphasizes the shared present moment, with a constant play between delayed observations and instantaneous visual perception.

At the same time that he was videotaping his performances, Graham was also producing installations using mirrors and live recording situations to probe real versus delayed time. In *Opposing Mirrors and Video Monitors on Time Delay* (1974; pl. 66), the viewer sees him- or herself in a seemingly infinite space created by surveillance cameras, monitors, and mirrors reflecting the opposite side of the room. The images recorded by the cameras are played back on the monitors with a five-second delay. Graham has used the device of time delay repeatedly in his installations; he considers the effect to be present even in works without cameras, such as his pavilions. One such structure, *Double Cylinder (The Kiss)* (pl. 65), commissioned in 1994 by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, is constructed of two-way mirror, transparent glass, and steel. The mirror (a central motif for Graham and for a number of his contemporaries) both extends and disrupts the space, which is ultimately activated only by the presence of the viewer who moves in and out of it. It also lends a history of cultural associations as a tool of self-identification and social manipulation. —TZ
05 Double Cylinder (The Kiss) 1994 / Installation view at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1996 / Two-way mirror, glass, and steel / Each cylinder: 96 x 96 x 96 in. / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Accessions Committee Fund. 


Skenováno pro studijní účely
Fragmented reflections of bodies and space in continual flux unite Jonas's early performances with mirrors. *Mirror Piece I* (1969) and *Mirror Piece II* created the illusion of dislocated space as participants carried wall mirrors in formal patterns. Jonas's performance choreography was informed in part by postmodern dance of the 1960s, which emphasized natural and pedestrian movement. Repositioning the mirrors established a tension between the precision of the image (a fragment of the surroundings or audience) and its loss through constant transition—a participatory game that relied on the presence of people constantly looking at their reflections. The mirror has remained a frequent prop and metaphor in Jonas's work to this day. —TZ.

In the 1970s Campus developed a series of closed-circuit video installations that examine the viewer's confrontation with his or her own image. The work *der*, for example, probes the nature of vision and the relationship between absence and presence. Moving toward the entrance of a dark, empty room, the viewer steps into an area surveyed by a video camera, becoming part of a live recording that is projected onto a wall inside. Entering the installation, one crosses paths with one's own electronically generated image, an illusion that disappears once the viewer is inside. Campus makes us aware that we can never perceive ourselves as others do. —TZ.
HANS HAACKE

Originally presented as part of Prospect 69 at the Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany, Haacke’s News (1969; pl. 70) featured a telex machine that printed a news stream from the German press agency DPA. Large paper piles spilled onto the floor, and visitors were welcome to pick up portions to read. Questioning public access to information and raising awareness of the omnipresent media machine, Haacke brought the news—and by extension the larger world—into the gallery, a space normally reserved for the reading of art. An assertion of the importance of facing political realities, Haacke’s gesture is an apt reflection of the times, as a number of artists were then challenging the supposed autonomy of the artwork and neutrality of the museum. In 1969 he joined the Art Workers’ Coalition, a New York group that fought for various museum policy reforms and also pressured cultural institutions to show solidarity with the international anti–Vietnam War movement.

The following year Haacke addressed the news once more in a direct critique of the economic and political ties of museums. His famous MOMA-Poll (pl. 69) at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, asked visitors whether New York governor (and MoMA board member) Nelson Rockefeller’s refusal to denounce President Richard Nixon’s Indochina policy would be reason not to vote for Rockefeller in the coming November election. The response to this query was plainly visible: the acrylic ballot boxes revealed that there were twice as many yes votes.

News does not analyze news content but simply delivers it, spewing out stories upon stories. The sheer volume of paper, growing as a sculpture over time, gives form to the constant cycle of processing and discarding information. The teletype machine and news source are updated each time the piece is installed; the 2008 version, for example, uses a dot-matrix printer and a subscription to an RSS newsfeed. —TZ

The Argentinean collective Group Frontera (Adolfo Bronowski, Carlos Espartaco, Mercedes Esteves, and Ines Gross) participated in _Experience_, MoMA's watershed 1970 exhibition of conceptual art. Their contribution involved a recording booth in which visitors responded to a questionnaire on personal politics that probed attitudes toward a range of topics, including sex, art, and government. Upon leaving the booth, participants could watch the playback of taped interview sessions on a grid of wall-mounted monitors. — 72
Influenced by cybernetics, semiotics, and information theory, Willats is one of the key figures of British conceptual art. Keenly interested in networking tools, technologies of interaction, scientific methods, and social patterns, he emerged in the 1960s as one of the pioneers of a practice that moved outside the artistic arena of the museum and gallery to address cultural and sociopolitical concerns more directly. Pieces such as *Social Resource Project for Tennis Clubs* (1972) explored specific nonart environments and their relation to their inhabitants. With a focus on what the artist calls the “environmental fact,” Willats’s investigations took the form of what today might be termed community projects. *Variable Sheets* (1965; reformulated in 1991 as *New Directions*, part of the *Multiple Clothing* series) examines the ways in which clothes express social relationships. The work also offers an indication of Willats’s interest in a linguistic definition of reality: participants don recombinable garments equipped with clear plastic pockets, which they can fill with words of their choosing. This direction was further developed in *Meta Filter* (1973–74), an early computer-based artwork in which two participants discuss a set of images about people’s everyday lives. *A Moment of Action* (1974; pls. 72–74) also explores the link between images and words: six wall-mounted panels present a series of photographs of the same woman annotated with six different “tags” (Context, Identity, Intention, Action, Effect, and Reflection) and corresponding analytical data. The gallery visitor is asked to fill out a questionnaire judging the appropriateness of the variables. The artwork thus becomes an agent for addressing and reflecting upon the production of value and meaning. In Willats’s words, “In the concept of counter consciousness the object’s status as an icon is replaced with the perception of the object functioning as an agent or tool, that is integral to our relationships, to the making of society.” In 1972 the artist founded a Centre for Behavioural Art dedicated to fieldwork in a variety of contexts, from housing projects to underground clubs and, in this case, art spaces. —RF
Mónica Mayer  
*El tendedero* (The Clothesline) 1978 / Installation view at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, 1978 / Clothesline, clothespins, wood, and paper / 78% x 137% in. / Courtesy the artist

Mayer became involved in the Movimiento Feminista Mexicano in the mid-1970s, confronting issues of sexism and social injustice. In 1978 she installed *El tendedero* (The Clothesline) at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City. In preparation she asked some eight hundred women to fill in the blank in the following statement, writing their answers on pink slips of paper: "As a woman, what I detest most about Mexico City is ____." Their responses, which mostly referred to sexual aggression and harassment, were clipped to clotheslines in the gallery, forming a "wall" more than eleven feet wide and six feet tall. The installation kept evolving as female visitors added their own comments. —MP.
In his signature felt hat, fisherman’s vest, and jeans, Beuys strides vigorously toward the camera in the print multiple *La rivoluzione siamo noi* (We Are the Revolution, 1972; pl. 77). Here, as in many of his post-Fluxus actions, the artist combined his own iconic persona with a compelling slogan, inviting us to join him in his revolutionary stance toward art and societal change. The same call to action was communicated by the sculptural objects that stemmed from his performances, including diagrammatic blackboard drawings such as *Rose for Direct Democracy* (1973) and *Board II (Everyone Is an Artist)* (1978).

Together with video art pioneers Nam June Paik and Douglas Davis, Beuys participated in the first live international satellite telecast on June 27, 1977, when *Documenta 6* transmitted their performances to more than twenty-five countries. Beuys’s contribution was a compelling nine-minute speech that he delivered without notes directly to the television camera (see pl. 75). The lecture expounded his theory of art as social sculpture: “art that no longer refers solely to the modern art world, to the artist, but comprehends a notion of art relating to everyone and to [the] very question and problem of the social organism in which people live. Without doubt, such a notion of art would no longer refer exclusively to the specialists within the modern art world but extend to the whole work of humanity.”

Beuys’s utopian writings and lectures continue to have a major impact on critical thinking about the role of the artist and the social implications of art. In 1974 Beuys, who was regarded as an influential and performative teacher, founded the Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research (FIU), a school outside the academic system that admitted all students (see pl. 79). A project under the auspices of FIU, *7000 Eichen* (*7000 Oaks*; pl. 78) embodied Beuys’s political and ecological activism and mirrored his involvement in the founding of the Green Party in Germany. Beuys began this expansive living monument in 1982 for *Documenta 7* in Kassel, Germany; it was completed by his son, Wenzel Beuys, in 1987, a year after the artist’s death. It was a symbolic beginning for an artwork that was intended to be ongoing: a group effort of individuals and institutions planting thousands of trees and basalt markers in public spaces worldwide. —TZ
Suzanne Lacy and Linda Pruess International Dinner Party 1979 / Event at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1979 / Courtesy the artists

Lacy and Pruess organized International Dinner Party in conjunction with the March 14, 1979, opening of Judy Chicago’s The Dinner Party (fig. 22) at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The action began as a twenty-four-hour dinner party involving more than two thousand women around the world. The artists invited participants to host dinners that evening in honor of women in their respective regions. Each party sent a collective message via telegram for display in one of several albums. The artists marked the location of each dinner on a black-and-white map of the world. In this pre-internet era, the global event necessitated that the artists gather mailing lists from organizations and send thousands of postcards to solicit participants. — TZ
TOM MARIONI

The 1970s witnessed an unprecedented rise of conceptual art in the San Francisco Bay Area. Marioni, a leading pioneer, founded the Museum of Conceptual Art (MOCA) in San Francisco's South of Market district as early as 1970. He considered MOCA to be a large-scale social artwork: an interactive installation housing events and actions by its many member artists. Along with 112 Greene Street, the Kitchen, and P.S.1 in New York and F Space in Los Angeles, Marioni's conceptual art museum was one of the first alternative, artist-run spaces in the United States. On Wednesday nights he started hosting free salons, and to this day he organizes gatherings in his studio where artists can meet, converse, and drink beer. He draws his inspiration from an activity remembered fondly from his art school days: drinking beer with friends.

In 1970, around the same time that he started his studio salon, Marioni installed The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends Is the Highest Form of Art at the Oakland Museum of California under the pseudonym Allan Fish:

I invited sixteen friends to the museum on a Monday when it was normally closed…. I told the curator, George Neubert, to get the beer and to be there. Everybody showed up, and we drank and had a good time. The debris was left on exhibit as record of the event. Basically, the show consisted of the evidence of the act. It was an important work for me, because it defined Action rather than Object as art.

As bartenders and beer drinkers, Marioni's friends became collaborators in this social artwork. Since then the project has been installed as a fully functioning beer salon at a variety of museums and other venues, anticipating by nearly two decades the 1990s practice of taking over traditional art spaces with bars, clubs, and social events. The salon was part of an exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1979 (see pl. 82); its detritus (empty beer bottles, shelves, and a Coldspot refrigerator), reassembled as the installation FREE BEER (The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends Is the Highest Form of Art) (1970–79), now resides in SFMOMA's permanent collection. —MP
A working restaurant installed at the corner of Prince and Wooster Streets in Manhattan’s SoHo neighborhood, Food was conceived in 1973 by Matta-Clark in collaboration with Tina Girouard, Suzi Harris, Rachel Lew, and Carol Goodden. Food served food, but the restaurant maintained a flexible schedule to help the artists who worked there; it also acted as a meeting place where they could generate activity and discussion. With a similar sense of civic duty, Matta-Clark’s Fresh Air Cart offered passersby on New York city streets “pure air” from an oxygen tank as a respite from urban pollution. —MP
In 1968 Chip Lord and Doug Michels (joined later by Curtis Schreier) founded Ant Farm, a multidisciplinary collective involved with alternative architecture, performance, and video. Based in San Francisco (and later Houston), they embraced the youth counterculture of the time, which influenced their visionary desire to work collaboratively outside the traditional art realm. Idealistic, nonhierarchical, and culturally "underground," the collective took its name from a friend who commented that its members worked like an ant farm. Notable projects include the air-filled vinyl Inflatables (1969–72), performances such as Citizens Time Capsule (1975; pl. 86), the Cadillac Ranch (1974) installation in Amarillo, Texas, and videos such as Media Burn (1975).

Lord and Michels grew up loving American cars; as teenagers they often worked on customizing Fords and Cadillacs. Lord describes the American Interstate Highway System, started in 1956, as a "monument to the machine: the automobile." The highways allowed for increased mobility across the United States, but they also tore apart cities and displaced historic communities. As a gesture of both tribute and critique, Ant Farm customized a van with video equipment and skylights—their response to "nomadic truckitecture"—and drove cross-country in 1971, staging lectures and events along the way (see pls. 85, 88). "We felt that the roadside environment was changing fast and deserved precise documentation of the motels and cheap restaurants, road-side attractions, gas stations, and gift shops that made Route 66 so junky and important in the fifties," they later wrote.

In 2008 the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art commissioned Lord and Schreier, along with the collaborating artist Tomb, to revisit this project via Ant Farm Media Van v08 (Time Capsule) (pl. 87). The artists are converting a 1972 Chevy C10 van into a time capsule, combining analog and digital media. The interior of the van houses a media hub: Ant Farm videos and a 35mm slide show of roadside documentation from the 1971 journey will be projected onto the back window. The media console, dubbed "Hookah" (another nod to the 1970s), will include a technical interface where visitors can plug in iPods, cell phones, and other personal devices to upload picture, video, and music files. The Hookah as time capsule and digital archive is scheduled to be accessed in the year 2030. —MP
Lord. Scheier. Tomb

1970

Network

1970

MEPVSAG V.B

2008 DIGITAL TIME CAPSULE

@ SFMOMA

Flat Screens

Hookam

Server + Tech Gear Under the Hood

AF Technician (in Lab Coat)

Surface is Black. Undercoating Sprayed On.

No Engine. Steering Wheel Drive Train or Wheels to Lighten.

Plug in Your iPod

Interior is Soft Foam + Acoustically Optimized

Castors or Skids Replace Wheels
Conceptual rendering of Ant Farm

Media Van v.08 (Time Capsule) 2007
Graphite on paper / 13 × 17 in. / Courtesy the artists

Truckstop Network Placemat
1971 / Offset lithography / 13 × 17 in. / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, gift of the artists

Jon Rubin FREEmobile 2003 / Installation view in Seattle, 2003 / Customized 1968 Chevy step van, free goods and services, and music / Courtesy the artist

Rubin’s FREEmobile toured Hillman City, a south Seattle neighborhood, during the summer of 2003. Each weekend a different resident drove through the district in Rubin’s custom-modified 1968 Chevy van, which had the word FREE emblazoned on both sides. The drivers and their families handed out free homemade items (crocheted bookmarks, hand-printed T-shirts) or offered personal services (psychic readings, hair braiding, bike repair) to their neighbors. The project introduced residents to one another, exhibiting and distributing their local folk culture. Reminiscent of an ice cream truck but offering nothing for sale, FREEmobile presented an alternative to commercial mass production. —TZ.
From mail art and radio broadcasts to telephone and facsimile transmissions, there is a long history of artists using communications systems to transcend geographic boundaries. Since they began collaborating in 1975, Los Angeles–based Galloway and Rabinowitz have exploited satellite technology as a dynamic medium for live performance and social interaction.

In works such as Satellite Arts Project (1977), organized with the assistance of NASA, several performing artists appeared in the virtual space of a live composite image, producing a new context for media-based performance. In 1980 Galloway and Rabinowitz organized Hole-in-Space (pls. 90–91), a live, three-evening event involving pedestrians at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, and the Broadway department store at the Century City Shopping Center, Los Angeles. Walking by a window, passersby were suddenly faced with an electronically generated apparition of people they could see and with whom they could speak. The project afforded a window to another place; the artists offered no explanation for the large televised images, which were visible for two hours per day in both locations. The project began on November 11, was followed by a day of rest, and then continued for two consecutive evenings, eventually becoming overcrowded due to the news coverage. The artists describe the progression of this “public communication sculpture” as “the evening of discovery, followed by the evening of intentional word-of-mouth rendezvous, followed by a mass migration of families and trans-continental loved ones, some of which had not seen each other for over twenty years.” The video documentation reveals exhibitionistic, enthusiastic, and humorous exchanges between strangers as well as poignant reunions. Today the work is sometimes presented as an installation, with the black-and-white footage from each transmission channel projected on two facing screens—a formal reference to the windows at the original sites.

Electronic Café (1984; pls. 92–111) significantly furthered Galloway and Rabinowitz’s concept of social space. As part of the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival in Los Angeles, they established the first cybercafes at the Museum of Contemporary Art and four restaurants that represented the cultural diversity of the city’s neighborhoods. There, video printers, telewriters, laser discs, and a computer server facilitated the exchange of drawings, poems, photos, and messages. Since 1989 the artists have expanded the concept to link different locations around the world. —TZ
Electronic Café: A computer and multi-media telecollaboration network bringing together five culturally diverse Los Angeles cafés in a visual dialogue.

Electronic Café 1984 / Network of five linked cyberscapes, Los Angeles, 1984 / Courtesy the artists
**telewissen / Herbert Schuhmacher Documenta der Leute** (People's Documenta)
1972 / Installation view in Kassel, Germany, 1972 / Closed-circuit video installation in Volkswagen van / Courtesy Herbert Schuhmacher

On the streets outside Documenta 5 (1972), the German video collective telewissen ("teleknowledge") conducted documentary, man-on-the-street interviews with passersby, playing back their pictures on monitors in a van outside the exhibition. The group used portable video equipment (then unfamiliar to the general public) as a tool for discovery and improved communications, encouraging critical public dialogue on a range of topics and exhibiting the audience as part of the project. — TZ

**Robert Adrian X. The World in 24 Hours** 1982 /
Telecommunications happening in Linz, Austria, 1982 / Courtesy the artist

The artist Robert Adrian X. began working with telecom technology in 1979. In 1982 he conceived a daylong telecommunication project for the Ars Electronica festival, linking twenty-four participating artists and groups around the world to a central project base at the broadcasting facilities of the radio station ORF in Linz, Austria. As noon arrived in each linked city, visual materials were transmitted through a variety of simple, readily available devices (telephone, wireless radio, slow-scan television, and fax machine) connected via telephone or amateur wireless connections. — TZ
ANTONI MUNTADAS

Tracing a history of social and cultural censorship since antiquity, Muntadas’s *The File Room* (http://www.thefileroom.org, 1994–present) exists as an online database that accumulates cases through the input of site visitors. The artist has developed an expansive system that reflects not only on censorship, but also on the archive. The public can submit cases by filling out an online form documenting the date, location, medium, and grounds for censorship; they can also browse the archive of cases, definitions of censorship, anticensorship resources, and essays on the project. The archive gives equal weight to all cases, retaining the integrity of each individual citation. This tool is intended to be organically shaped by users from a wide range of disciplines.

In 1994, at the Chicago Cultural Center, Muntadas first presented *The File Room* as an installation—an ominous, dimly lit room of file cabinets and computer terminals (see pl. 114). The installation provided access to the project website, notable at a time when only a fraction of the public was familiar with the internet. The presentation corresponded with Muntadas’s earlier installation-based works, such as *The Boardroom* (1987), which mirrored the bureaucratic spaces of powerful institutions.

The project is informed by two key developments of the 1990s: the birth of internet art and the aftermath of high-profile battles over arts censorship (notably the 1989–91 controversy over National Endowment for the Arts funding in America). While *The File Room* addresses a diversity of censored subjects, it effectively demonstrates how the arts have been and continue to be an easy target, systematically coming under fire for allegedly subversive content. A 1988 case uploaded by Muntadas is one of the earliest submissions to the archive and an indicator of the personal impetus of the project, succinctly documenting his own history as a censored artist. After inviting Muntadas to produce the video *TVE: Primer Intento*, Televisión Española (TVE), which controlled the rights to the project, chose not to broadcast the work, never giving an official explanation. The video represented more than two years of filming and research in TVE’s archives.

Since 1999 Muntadas’s strategy of revealing what might otherwise not be apparent has also informed his ongoing *On Translation* series, which addresses sociopolitical issues in relation to the concept of transcription and interpretation (see figs. 26–27). —TZ

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144 *The File Room* 1994 / Installation view at the Chicago Cultural Center, 1994 / Metal file cabinets, computer monitors, desk, and chair / Courtesy the artist

15 *Josh On They Rule* 2004–present / Online project (http://www.theyrule.net) / Courtesy the artist

*They sit on the boards of the largest companies in America. Many sit on government committees. They make decisions that affect our lives. They rule.* —Josh On

In 2004 the San Francisco Bay Area artist On launched *They Rule*, a forum for examining the insidious hold of private interests over American politics. Tapping into publicly accessible databases, the website identifies the ruling class of our capitalist society and maps the connections between these individuals. The project exploits key attributes of the internet—visualizing social networks, conducting data searches, soliciting user-generated maps and weblog submissions—in the service of online activism. —TZ
The economic, social, and legal conditions of art are integral aspects of Eichhorn's conceptual practice. Many of her projects also address and involve collaboration. Perhaps most notably, her installation Arbeit/Freizeit (Work/Leisure, 1996; pl. 116) invited staff at the Berlin headquarters of Generali Insurance to contribute to an exhibition of objects representing how they occupied themselves at the office and in their spare time. Eichhorn displayed the very personal objects they submitted in a vitrine in the office lobby.

In another Eichhorn project, however, it is the documentation of the conditions of engagement that constitutes the work. Prohibited Imports (pl. 117), first shown at Masataka Hayakawa Gallery, Tokyo, in 2003, examines ordinances relating to freedom of speech and the legal curtailment of that freedom, with specific reference to Japanese customs authorities' practice of censoring imported books. The artist mailed several parcels of books on AIDS, activism, gender, and art with explicit visual content from Berlin to her Tokyo gallery, assuming that Japanese officials would open and censor them. She discovered that the only publication censored by authorities at Tokyo's Narita Airport was Mapplethorpe: Die große Werkmonographie, a German catalogue of Robert Mapplethorpe's photography published in 1992. Two copies of the book were sent in separate shipments. One copy was censored; the other was not.

Eichhorn’s installation displays the two copies of the Mapplethorpe book on the upper shelf of a wall-mounted vitrine, open to the same spread so viewers can compare one photograph in censored and uncensored form. The picture in question is Mapplethorpe's 1977 photograph Patrice, N.Y.C.; eighteen other reproductions in the publication were also censored, indicating a thorough reading of the book by the Japanese authorities. The artist has lined up the other books she shipped in the lower part of the case, as though on a bookshelf, together with volumes on legislation, the state of the law and jurisdiction, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech in Japan.

Who actually censors and exactly how it is done are questions that remain unanswered. According to the customs officials, the imported goods were deemed articles that "injure public security or morals." Since the idea of the project was for customs to censor the books and, by censoring them, become a "coproducer" of the work, the gallery also had to become a party to censorship. —RF
Jens Haaning  *Super Discount*
1998 / Market event at Fri-Art, Fribourg, Switzerland, 1998 / Courtesy Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen

Haaning creates installations that reveal the disjunctions inherent in heterogeneous societies. By producing an environment for exchange, he accentuates the foreign within a nation's borders. In 1998 he staged a supermarket, *Super Discount*, that questioned the market value of common goods and compared the economies of France and Switzerland. Food, cleaning supplies, and gin were purchased in France and imported to Fribourg for sale at Fri-Art. Prices tend to be high in Switzerland, which is independent from the European Union; *Super Discount* provided a 35 percent savings compared to local stores, to the benefit of museum visitors. —MP
FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES

Museum visitors are not typically permitted to touch artwork, much less take it home with them. However, with Gonzalez-Torres’s takeaway pieces—stacks of mass-produced prints or piles of candy—the viewer is necessary to complete the work. By offering gifts without dictating what was to be done with them, the artist acknowledged that the individual posters or cellophane-wrapped candies have a future life beyond the gallery. One may find surviving prints pinned to someone’s wall or even used as wrapping paper. Gonzalez-Torres’s gift economy uses the exhibition context to question the uniqueness of the art object.

These works are not only about the generosity of giving but also the difficulty of letting go. Gonzalez-Torres started making the stack and candy pieces when his partner, Ross Laycock, was dying of AIDS, partly as a way of coming to terms with Laycock’s physical deterioration and eventual disappearance. The color, form, or weight of a given piece frequently carried personal significance for the artist. For instance, the amount of candy in “Untitled” (Loverboys) (1991) corresponds to the combined body weight of the artist and his lover, thus serving as a nonrepresentational double portrait.

The basic forms of Gonzalez-Torres’s floor and corner pieces evoke the precedent of minimalist sculpture but are imbued with poetic intimacy. He employed quotidian manufactured materials (lightbulbs, beaded curtains, clocks, and candy) that are associated with personal effects or household fixtures. The titles’ parenthetical elements reveal the works’ political undertones. “Untitled” (Public Opinion) (1991; pl. 121), for example, reflects on the conservative cultural climate of the United States. Whereas some stack pieces are text-based, others reproduce empty expanses of sky or sea. “Untitled” (1992/1993; pl. 119) belongs to a melancholic series of silhouetted birds against overcast skies. The striking image was repurposed in posters, billboards (pl. 120), and passports, alluding to the passage of time and the transitory state of being.

Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige  

*Circle of Confusion* 1997 / Installation view at the Cour Carrée du Louvre, Paris, 2007 / Chromogenic print, glue, and mirror / 118¾ × 157¾ in. / Courtesy In Situ / Fabienne Leclerc, Paris

The Lebanese filmmakers and artists Hadjithomas and Joreige have produced a body of work on the legacy of political conflict in their home country. *Circle of Confusion* depicts an aerial view of Beirut after the war, cut into three thousand tessellated sections and attached to a gigantic mirror. On the back of each numbered fragment is the message "Beirut does not exist." When the viewer takes away a piece as a souvenir, it reveals part of the mirror. As the representation of the city gradually disappears, the mirror reflects ever more of the gallery and its occupants. —12
Fletcher and Rubin have been influential in the development of art as social practice, undertaking individual and collaborative projects with a number of different communities. Interested in engaging nonart audiences and marginal groups, they often work to undermine the gallery and the museum as exclusive domains. Open calls for participation have hence become a seminal aspect of their production.

In 1998 the artists set up a copy stand in the lobby of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and asked visitors to allow them to photograph snapshots in their wallets (see pl. 123). Fletcher and Rubin viewed the project as a way to address the anticipated preciousness of the objects people expect to see when they come to a museum. The finished piece, titled *Pictures Collected from Museum Visitors’ Wallets* (pl. 124), is a selection of ten enlarged and framed chromogenic prints. Folded corners and other signs of wear give these rephotographed snapshots the patina of well-loved mementos.

Fletcher and Rubin had collaborated on site-specific projects in the past, notably *Some People from Around Here* (1997; pl. 125). This temporary public installation in Fairfield, California, consisted of eight-foot-tall portraits of six locals they met during their stay as the town’s artists in residence. The billboard-size likenesses were painted on plywood and placed alongside the I-80 freeway outside the city. During the three months the project was there, an estimated ten million people saw the installation while driving by. —TZ
Philippe Parreno: The Speaking Stone

1994 / Installation view at the Kunstmuseum Luzern, Luzerne, Switzerland. 1994 / Plastic, wireless loudspeaker, audiotape, and Walkman. / Courtesy Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York

An impromptu circle of people gather around a stone that addresses itself to the group as they sketch this object. Parreno’s Speaking Stone re-creates the communal experience of a drawing class in the gallery space. The art object speaks to the artists during the art-making process—a still life comes to life to provide instruction. — TE
Assignment #63
Make an encouraging banner.
Jenner
Milwaukee, Wisconsin USA

KEEP YOUR WITS ABOUT YOU

Assignment #63
Make an encouraging banner.
Cerise Wiegand
Hutchinson, Kansas USA

Assignment #63
Make an encouraging banner.
The Musgrove Family
Pine City, Minnesota USA

Harrell Fletcher and Miranda July. Learning to Love You More
2002–present / Online project
(http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com) / Courtesy the artists

In Learning to Love You More the general public responds to creative assignments on a website launched by Fletcher and July in 2002. Participants follow the simple instructions and submit documentation (a photograph, a text, or a video) to be posted online. The artists liken the prescriptive nature of these assignments to "a recipe, meditation practice, or familiar song" that guides people to their own experience. Now numbering more than five thousand from all over the world, the virtual submissions may also be selected for inclusion in physical exhibitions and other public presentations. — TZ
MINERVA CUEVAS

Toward the end of the twentieth century many young artists voiced a critique of the effects of globalization, embracing in their work a political activism that previously had been held to be antiartistic. Appropriation and simulation were two formal strategies used in the service of this political agenda. Cuevas launched *Mejor Vida Corp.*, or *M.V.C.*, in 1998 as a series of public interventions in Mexico City, joining forces with artists and media activists such as Heath Bunting (see pl. 132), whose site irational.org hosts Cuevas’s project. Striving to create an international network of people who question capitalism as a system, she addresses these farflung individuals via *M.V.C.*, whose Spanish name translates literally as “Better Life Corp.” *M.V.C.*’s mission statement announces that it “creates, promotes and distributes world wide products and services for free,” adding that it does not discriminate according to gender, race, religion, sexual preference, or economic status. With a logo that promises “a human interface,” the project ludicrously mimics the structure and vocabulary of a Mexican global corporation. Its website offers a typical roster of links to products, services, campaigns, information on shipping, and contact details.

*M.V.C.* not only provides its goods for free but also facilitates interventions in social spaces. One exemplary campaign targeted Melate, the national lottery of Mexico. Questioning the lottery’s alleged financing of public assistance, Cuevas altered the lottery’s identity and installed her revised logo on signs throughout Mexico City, adding statistical data that revealed how the system benefited private stakeholders. Another service offered the assistance of a security agent to help in dealings with the police. Cuevas’s approach to social activism extends to products such as fake student ID cards providing complimentary access to museums, free subway tickets, stickers with barcodes that reduce the price of supermarket goods (pl. 130), posters advertising “safety pills” to raise awareness of potential violence on public transportation, prestamped envelopes (pl. 131), and lottery tickets. Until 2003 she occupied an office at the Latinoamerica Tower in Mexico City as a way to reach out to audiences beyond the artistic context. Deeply rooted in everyday life (and the specific social context of Mexico), and partaking in alternative financial systems such as the gift economy, Cuevas’s work takes as its arena not the museum or art gallery but rather public spaces open to all individuals. —RF
Net art and net activism often went hand in hand in the formative period of the 1990s. Bunting’s irational.org is a website hosting the British artist’s own projects as well as those of friends and other activists. One such example, Identity Swap Database, produced by the Russian net artist Lialina in collaboration with Bunting, takes an ironic approach to the notion of identity at a time of search engines and global diaspora. Presented as a "service" for a global, multilingual community of migrants, the site’s text flashes constantly in four languages: English, German, Spanish, and Russian. — RF
“Walk for as long as you can while holding a 9mm Beretta in your right hand.” In Mexico City, the Belgian artist Alýs followed this self-imposed rule until the inevitable dramatic conclusion—his arrest—fifteen minutes later. He then convinced police officers to allow him to repeat the performance, including the arrest, as a staged reenactment for the camera. His double video projection Re-enactments (2001; pls. 133–38) presents performance documentation on one screen and the reenactment on the other. In both versions Alýs is seen buying a pistol and carrying it at his side as he walks swiftly through the city streets. The second performance borrows the stylized language of crime reenactments on television, employing dramatic angles of Alýs and the gun. In the first footage cinematographer Rafael Ortega focused on trailing the artist’s tall, lanky figure; the second version, however, emphasizes the participatory role of passersby as they become aware of the potential threat and alert the authorities. The work belongs to a series of casually executed street actions in which the artist makes use of anomalous props: pushing a block of melting ice, dragging a metal collector, or dripping a can of paint.

Whereas Re-enactments provoked the involvement of a few individuals, When Faith Moves Mountains (2002; pl. 139) recruited five hundred Peruvian volunteers to move a mountain in Ventanilla, on the outskirts of Lima. On April 11, 2002, Alýs coordinated efforts to shovel a gigantic sand dune, moving it an almost imperceptible four inches. According to the artist, this irrational project exercised the principle of maximum effort for minimal effect. “The Lima Action wanted to re-socialize Land Art,” he says. “It wanted to rehumanize it by turning sculpture into mass experience, while referring to the condition of landless people.” —TZ
On June 18, 1984, in Orgreave, England, a climactic clash occurred between striking miners and riot police. Seventeen years later, on June 17, 2001, the British artist Deller revisited the trauma of this event and its biased coverage in the Thatcher-era news media. He staged a reenactment at the original site in Yorkshire, enlisting a corps of volunteers comprising war reenactment enthusiasts, townspeople, and members of both sides of the conflict. Directed by Mike Figgis, the resulting documentary aired on the BBC in 2002. — TZ

**When Faith Moves Mountains**
2002 / 16mm film (color, sound) transferred to two video projections and one video on monitor / Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, New York
“By coincidence I became a sculptor.” This statement by Wurm applies to all who follow his often deadpan, absurd instructions and in the act become sculptors, too. When one first encounters his One Minute Sculptures (2006, p. 143), the display of ordinary objects—a fridge, plastic bottles, tennis balls—on a white platform may suggest the idea of sculpture, yet the artist makes it clear that this is not the actual artwork. What is seen is not yet realized, but only a virtual artwork embodied in the instructional drawings and corresponding props needed to perform each sculpture temporarily.

Wurm declares his practice to be a “research of emptiness, virtuality and volume,” toward which he typically employs a variety of media, including photography, video, objects, and drawings. The seeming artlessness of his work speaks openly of everyday life, a concern that he inherited from Fluxus, whose artists manifested a similar antiart attitude and playful approach to the poetic. Though he is also aware of the looming tradition of Viennese Actionism, which staged shocking and often violent situations, Wurm chooses to quietly transform the participant’s embarrassment into sculpture. Offering no space for utilitarian thought, his artistic language is as accessible and universal as the slapstick comedy of Laurel and Hardy. But faced with Adorno as Oliver Hardy in the Bohemian Girl (1936), and the burden of desperation (2006), one of a series of Wurm works addressing philosophers, one perceives that it is less of a joke than an absurd confusion of genres and topics.

The artist is probably always the first witness of his often unforeseen results. He says that experiencing the work takes a “willingness to become confused,” and he asks this openness from all who choose to carry out his instructions. Yet the decision to step up and perform—and thus also be temporarily exhibited for others to watch—is typically a small one. It does not take any virtuosity, only curiosity. In turn, each performer is rewarded by the satisfaction of having physically realized a vision of something very specific and also, momentarily, of having become somebody different. In real life it sometimes takes only a few pounds gained involuntarily to have a similar feeling. And at the end of the day, Wurm points out, “art deals with the difficulty of coping with life—be it by means of philosophy or a nutritional diet.” —RF.
Ten colorful costumes for children, designed by Víctor Féliz after historic models of the twentieth century, were fabricated in a workshop set up by Sarkis at the Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt, famous for housing Joseph Beuys’s Block Beuys (1970–86), a multiroom installation of objects collected by the artist. The children dressed up in these clothes in preparation for a tour of the seven galleries that comprise Beuys’s installation. Their fluorescent procession through the earthen-colored Block Beuys was strongly theatrical, countering the static permanence of the installation with the spirit of live interpretation. —RF
Put your head and arm inside the fridge and have a line, or smoke a joint or drink a beer.

143 One Minute Sculptures 2006 / Installation views at the Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Japan, 2006 / Performative objects and instruction drawings on pedestal / Collection of the artist
144 Keep a cool head 2003 / Refrigerator and instruction drawing / 33 1/2 x 19 1/4 x 24 in. / Collection of the artist

Gabriel Orozco Ping Pond Table 1998 / Installation view at ARC / Musée d’Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1998 / Modified ping-pong tables, water lilies, water, and mixed media / 30 x 167 1/2 x 167 1/2 in. / Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Play is crucial to the way we learn to socialize and understand reality. From Marcel Duchamp to Fluxus, many artists have explored an interest in game structures. A more recent artistic interpretation of the universal desire to engage in games, Orozco’s Ping Pond Table subverts preconceived ideas of play. A typical game is played according to preestablished rules. In this case, however, participants must figure out how to negotiate four sections of a ping-pong table arranged around a lily pond. Orozco’s interactive sculptural form is typical of work by artists associated with relational aesthetics in the 1990s. —RF
In the 1960s Gerz began to investigate the nature of public space via conceptual gestures and performance; since the 1980s he has focused on site-specific projects that foster public participation and dialogue with the community. He emphasizes the process of production, establishing a context for participation in which he need not be present. In 2000, for example, he initiated the photography project *The Gift* (pls. 147–49) in Tourcoing, France. Local residents were invited to have black-and-white portraits taken by young artists and photography students over the course of one weekend. Each participant received a portrait in return—not his or her own, but that of a stranger—and was asked to display the picture at home. Visitors who might not otherwise collect contemporary art were thus able to display a piece that was part of a larger network of portraits, what the artist calls a “collection” on permanent loan to the public. Gerz partnered with regional newspapers both to make the project known to the community and to publish the resulting photographs (see pl. 150). He realized the project again later that year as part of the *Vision.Ruhr* exhibition in Dortmund, Germany. This time, however, the photography studio and the production process were on full view, with the framed portraits exhibited at the local Museum am Ostwall.

Gerz’s project shows the development of an exhibition and an artwork. At first, while portraits are taken, nothing is displayed; gradually, as the photographs are printed and framed, they begin to fill the space. The visitors are important agents: they are part of the production as models, and then, in turn, they own part of the collection. The gift implied is less about the receipt of a portrait, since it depicts a stranger, than about the shared experience and the exchange itself. “What is offered is what is received,” notes Gerz, who says that the project represents “a collective memory” and a “self-portrait” of a region. At the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the photography studio will be visible alongside the displayed and stored framed portraits. Participants are invited to a closing reception at which each will be given the portrait of another visitor, and thus *The Gift* will be redistributed to its very producers. The artist will ask all subjects to contribute pictures or commentary online to demonstrate how they exhibit their photographs at home. —MP
Sylvie Blocher *Je et Nous* (I and Us) 2003 / Single-channel color video installation with sound, 55 min. / Courtesy the artist.

Part of Blocher’s ongoing video portrait series *Living Pictures, Je et Nous (I and Us)* features a hundred residents of a densely populated Paris suburb who responded to her open call for volunteers. They appear one after another in a studio setting, wearing custom-printed bilingual T-shirts (produced with the help of the artist) that express a range of brief yet intense—and often unexpected—statements. Communication takes place not just through text but also through subtext: facial expression and body language. The work developed out of the artist’s long-term collaboration with this impoverished community as a member of the interdisciplinary collective Campement Urbain.—TZ

Je suis un mat vidéo que je puisse remplir.
I want an empty word that I could fill.
Jochen Gerz: Das Geschenk

WESTFÄLISCHE RUNDSCHAU

vision.ruhr KUNST MEDIEN INTERAKTION AUF DER ZECHE ZOLLERN II/IV DORTMUND 14.05.-20.08.2000


Ein Gemeinschaftsprojekt von vision.ruhr, der Westfälischen Rundschau, dem Museum am Ostwall und der Fachhochschule Dortmund.
The idea of shared authorship and collective production took on new meaning in the 1990s, when the internet introduced new opportunities for networking. The pan-European collective c a l c (casqueiro atlantico laboratorio cultural) is a self-styled “cultural laboratory” of multimedia artists and designers formed in 1990. Based in Seville, Spain, c a l c’s core membership comprises Teresa Alonso Novo, Tomi Scheiderbauer, Malek Spiegol, Looks Brunner, and Dani Gómez Blasco. In 1999, on the invitation of Swiss Expo.02, c a l c, together with collaborating artist Gees, began to develop communimage (pl. 153); the project has continued independently to this day. Visitors to the website are invited to upload pictures to a grid system, along with some basic metainformation. Each image, or “patch,” may be viewed individually using a navigator tool that can zoom in or out. Contributions are unfiltered and unregulated, resulting in widely varied subject matter: from the photorealistic to the animated, from the intimate to the exhibitionist. The multitudinous images together form one collective map, so large that if it were printed out at actual size it would reach a height of nearly forty-six feet. As of late June 2008 it contained more than 25,700 images uploaded by some 2,220 visitors.

Viewed as a whole, communimage forms an abstract, polymorphous shape: a true demographic representation of the global internet community. Indeed, the artists’ platform for image exchange foreshadowed the current boom of visual postings on sites such as YouTube and Flickr. At the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, viewers will encounter the project in the gallery as a large-scale print (communimage—a moment in time VI), reflecting the site’s contents as of September 17, 2008. To display the site in the museum as a static print may seem a contradictory gesture, but it is also a compelling reflection on the status of the image in the public realm. —MP
George Legrady  Pockets Full of Memories 2003-05 / Installation view at Cornerhouse Gallery, Manchester, England, 2005 / Mixed-media installation, projections, computer terminals, scanning station, and wall stickers / Collection of the artist

Legrady’s interactive installation Pockets Full of Memories investigates the interstices between systems of classification, memory recall, and semantics. Visitors are invited to scan personal belongings and enter descriptions of them in a database. Using the Kohonen self-organizing map algorithm, the objects are categorized according to their descriptions, with like placed by like and distanced from unlike. The comparisons are made visible as they are projected onscreen in the exhibition space. —MP
Text-based conversations were at the core of the internet even prior to its widespread public use in the late 1990s. In 2000 Sack, a digital artist and media theorist, developed Conversation Map (pl. 155), a sophisticated example of internet art that addresses public discussion forums for online communities. In response to the phenomenon of many-to-many exchanges on the internet, Sack designed a newsgroup graphical browser that automatically analyzes thousands of messages in what he terms “very large-scale conversation,” or VLSC, occurring on listservs and Usenet newsgroups. For Sack, the unprecedented scale of such conversations required a new model of analyses, one that bridged the macro and micro levels of conversation—a computational tool stemming from the field of discourse architecture. Though the resulting website can be used like a typical electronic news or email program, the system is capable of analyzing content and exhibiting the social and semantic relationships between messages, making large-scale conversations comprehensible to the user. Functioning as a kind of thesaurus of a group conversation, the project reveals the themes and terms used among and produced by participants. With its simplified aesthetic, the project gestures toward the look of the early internet while anticipating the use of tag clouds and other current forms of data visualization.

Conversation Map presents three panels of interrelated dimensions: social networks (the interpersonal relationships, or who is corresponding with whom), themes (the textual content, a menu of discussion themes embodied in the messages), and semantic network (equivalent terms under discussion by the group). These three aspects are cross-linked; clicking on one panel highlights terms in the others, and clicking on a theme highlights the part of the social network in which participants have discussed that theme. The maps can also be used to access message archives.

This online work has been used to represent the terms of the debate, including media and collective discussions, regarding political candidates in American presidential elections. The maps it generates function not only as tools, but also, notes Sack, as “a technology of the self”—a means of group self-reflection and discussion that predates the rise of the blogosphere. —TZ
Poétice involves a series of “teleinterventions” into the urban landscape: visual poems publicly displayed in a variety of ways, including on commercial electronic billboards and in movie trailers. The public composes and submits messages via the internet or SMS; these texts are translated into fonts composed of dingbats and system characters, exploring new boundaries of nonphonetic language. For Beiguelman, Poétice has “a political agenda not only because you hack the advertisement structure and use this as part of your public space, but also because [it] questions the role of the author and the work of art aura.” —TJ.
MATTHIAS GOMMEL

Dangling from the ceiling, two spotlit headsets invite visitors to enter into dialogue. Microphones record the participants' speech and channel it to the headphones. Although the other person is audible, a three-second delay impedes clear communication. Gommel describes the experience of Delayed (2002; pl. 157) as the perception of one's own act of speech being detached from its execution.

A founding member of the robotlab collective, the German artist investigates interactivity, communication between man and machine, and the impact of digital processes on physical space. Delayed revisits notions of feedback that were introduced by artists in the early 1970s: closed-circuit video installations that not only included the visitor in the picture, in real time, but also explored the very limits of systems of communication. According to cybernetic theory, distortions and delays are fundamental aspects of electronic communication; it is in these delays that perception and awareness are heightened. Building on this history of experimentation with time delay in early media art, Delayed also implicates the ubiquity of personal communication technologies today. Despite the continual improvement of cell phone and computer devices, the inevitable delays remind us of technology's failures. A key theme in Gommel's work, Brief glitches and slow responses frustrate our increasing expectation for speed—and ease—in all modes of communication. —TZ.
Marie Sester. **ACCESS** 2003 / Installation view at Ars Electronica, Austria, 2003 / Online project (http://www.accessproject.net), custom software and electronics, robotic spotlight and acoustic beam, and cameras / Courtesy the artist

ACCESS is an installation in which visitors to the project website can track individuals in public spaces using a robotic spotlight and acoustic beam system. The spotlight follows the selected individual while the beam projects audio that only he or she can hear. Sester creates "a paradoxical communication loop" between tracker and tracked, both of whom are unaware that they are the only ones triggering or hearing the sound. Instead of choosing to step into the spotlight, the performer appears to be selected by it. Though playful, the installation underscores the omnipresence of surveillance technology in today's society while highlighting our culture's voyeuristic obsession with celebrity. —72

Skenováno pro studijní účely
Cardiff’s audiovisual narrative walking pieces conflate cinematic fiction with the physical immediacy of moving in real time and space. From Central Park to the Carnegie Library, the artist has created unique site-specific tours that propose an alternate reality for each location, revealing an artistic approach to psychogeography.

_The Telephone Call_ (2001; pls. 159–66) is an immersive itinerary through the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. After checking out a digital camcorder and headphones, visitors synchronize their movement through the museum with the staged journey depicted on the small screen. Cardiff chose these handheld recording devices because of their ease of use. At a moment when many artists working with video chose to approach narrative through projection, Cardiff’s singular use of a mobile display format pushed the medium out of the paradigm of the black box installation. Her tours are only fully realized through the active participation of viewers and their navigation of the physical environment.

Cardiff narrates her stories with stream-of-conscious monologues, which could not be further removed from the didactic discussion of artworks that characterizes the typical museum audio tour. Her imagery considers the entire context, from exhibition galleries to public areas to the interstitial spaces that link them and guide the flow of visitor traffic. Cardiff’s soundtracks collage various ambient sounds and music, but she always uses her own voice to address the audience, thereby establishing an intimate connection. Against the fixed backdrop of SFMOMA’s architecture, _The Telephone Call_ exposes the disparity between the real and represented flux of visitors and exhibition activity—a haunting reminder that institutions and their collections long outlive the people who visit or work there. —TZ
In *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk*, a famous example of institutional critique, Fraser posed as a museum docent under the pseudonym of Jane Castleton and voluntarily led tours offering a veritable running commentary on everything from the cafeteria to the drinking fountain. Her script was woven together from a variety of literature, including a manual on the poorhouse, thereby questioning the traditional role of the museum as an arbiter of taste. In recent videos that feature the artist listening to exhibition audio tours, Fraser has continued to demonstrate how art institutions perform for their audiences, letting the museum speak for (and hang) itself. —TZ
LYNN
HERSHMAN
LEESON

Pioneering the presentation of art in alternative spaces has been a characteristic strength of Hershman Leeson's practice for more than three decades, from her early performance and site-specific installations to her recent network activity. Nearly all of her work expresses a desire for public interaction and an interest in the construction of identity (her own or that of fictional others) via photography, diaries, and other forms of documentation. The San Francisco–based artist recently teamed up with the Stanford Humanities Lab to revisit parts of her working archive (1966–2002) that were acquired by the university. Their first project has focused on reconfiguring the artifacts of her historic project The Dante Hotel (1973–74) in the multiuser virtual environment of Second Life (see figs. 29–30, pls. 168–70). Entitled Life², this experiential digital archive broadens the audience for Hershman Leeson's work while reflecting on the fragmentary nature of memory. Indeed, the project coincides with increasing public demand for records and archival material to be made accessible on the internet.

The original installation of The Dante Hotel proposed that visitors directly experience a fictional world in real time and space. Occupying a rented room in a residential hotel in San Francisco's North Beach district, the project was open twenty-four hours a day for nine months. Viewers checked out a key and entered the room to discover signs of life of the "occupants": sleeping wax figures, recorded sounds, and fictional personal belongings. Mannequins populated the artist's other tableaux from this critical period, appearing in public venues such as New York's Chelsea Hotel and Bonwit Teller store windows. Her use of doll bodies foreshadowed her later work with artificial intelligence agents that attempt to converse with real people. In a related development, Roberta, a female persona that originated with the durational performance work Roberta Breitmore (1974–78) and was resurrected as the telerobotic doll CyberRoberta (1995–98), has been reborn once more as an avatar host for Life².

Second Life also serves as a venue for the artist to reflect on the exhibition of her work; there she will digitally relocate documentation of Life¹, a yearlong exhibition series that is jointly organized by six major Bay Area art institutions and includes the SFMOMA presentation of Life¹. Currently under expansion, with neighboring gallery wings being added to house other past projects, Life² offers a dynamic new model for the archive and the museum. —TZ
68–70. *Life* 2006–present / Online project (http://ahul.com/exxonlife/ NEWare/128/128/60) / Collection of the artist

*The Dante Hotel* 1973 / Collage with photographs, ink, and stickers / 13 × 17 in. / Collection of the artist

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**Eva and Franco Mattes aka 010010111011101.org**

*Synthetic Performance* 2007 / Second Life reenactments of VALIE EXPORT's *TAPP* and *TASTXINO* (*TAP* and *TOUCH CINEMA*, pl. 172) and Vito Acconci's *Seedbed* (pl. 173) / Courtesy Postmasters Gallery, New York

The Synthetic Performance series translates seminal works such as VALIE EXPORT's *TAPP* and *TASTXINO* (*TAP* and *TOUCH CINEMA*, 1968; pls. 49–50), Abramovic/Ulay's *Impenetrability* (1977; pls. 52–53), Chris Burden's *Shear* (1973), Vito Acconci's *Seedbed* (1972), and Joseph Beuys's *7000 Eichen* (1000 Oaks, 1982–87; pl. 70) into the virtual realm of Second Life. Avatars perform these historic, often bodycentric actions for an audience of other avatars. The series raises questions about the meaning of certain performances when recontextualized—not only by other artists, but also online. Wrenched from the specificity of time, place, and performer, these reenactments reflect a generation of contemporary new media artists responding to the powerful legacy of conceptualism. – TZ.
Attracted to the idea of creating a platform or environment for online participation, artists have permeated the realm of the internet since its inception. The Thing (http://www.the-thing.org, 1992–present) and Rhizome (http://rhizome.org, 1996–present) are but two examples in which networking and information are prioritized as artistic strategies. Many such platforms have attempted to act against the tendency of closed and centralized systems to channel user interaction. Today, in the age of social networking, community-oriented software art typically involves artists, designers, and programmers who collaborate to counter the dominant forces of the online market. Among the simplest and most effective recent examples of this approach is the work of Phiffer, a California hacker and activist, and Zer-Aviv, a New York–based artist. Their project ShiftSpace (2007–present; pl. 174) proposes an alternative way of processing online information. “By pressing the [shift] + [space] keys, a ShiftSpace user can invoke a new meta layer above any web page to browse and create additional interpretations, contextualizations and interventions—which we call Shifts,” they write. Users can choose between several authoring tools (“Spaces”) that allow them to annotate or modify the content of a page and, through ShiftSpace, share that shift with the rest of the web. “Trails” are maps of shifts that create metalayer navigation across websites. A transparent layer allows users to intervene by posting notes or swapping images.

In the spirit of alternative platforms, the tools available on ShiftSpace are developed as open-source projects. Inspired by the Wikipedia model of collective authorship, Phiffer and Zer-Aviv also reach out to the larger community of developers and media activists by granting commissions for further development. Repurposing tools and protocols has been a significant artistic strategy for decades, from early video synthesizers to Radical Software Group’s appropriation of the FBI’s Carnivore surveillance software (see pls. 175–76). In the field of media art, the call for participation often hides a more conceptual gesture that tends simply to change the visual parameters of a given set of data—a strategy that led to the so-called browser art of the 1990s. With ShiftSpace, however, there is an actual use value and a collective productivity that cannot be underestimated. —RF
In 1996 the Federal Bureau of Investigation developed DC51000 (aka Carnivore), a wiretapping tool for monitoring internet traffic. Radical Software Group (RSG) modeled CarnivorePE after the FBI program. The project uses an open-source tool called a packet sniffer to monitor communications on a local network. Using RSG's server-client architecture, various new media artists have produced applications from the gathered data. RSG thus provides a platform for other artists to address the implications of network surveillance. — T2
BumpList [pls. 177–78] is a mailing list aiming to re-examine the culture and rules of online email lists. BumpList only allows for a maximum amount of subscribers so that when a new person subscribes, the first person to subscribe is “bumped,” or unsubscribed from the list. Once subscribed, you can only be unsubscribed if someone else subscribes and “bumps” you off. BumpList actively encourages people to participate in the list process by requiring them to subscribe repeatedly if they are bumped off. —Jonah Brucker-Cohen and Mike Bennett

The artists’ description of their project is straightforward but not without black humor. In order for the community to sustain itself, its members must operate in silence and exclusivity. Only six members at a time can be part of this elite in-group. If anyone new joins, the listserv automatically eliminates whoever has been on the list the longest—a strictly democratic principle but hardly an appropriate way to advance democratic society. The project does not attempt to resolve this contradiction, but rather thrives on Darwinian selection: those who persist and resubscribe will eventually prevail.

Whereas many net artworks have aged rapidly due to their reliance on specific software, BumpList: An email community for the determined has maintained its radical impact. Launched in 2003 as part of the Whitney Museum of American Art’s online exhibition Artport, it has since garnered several awards. The project reflects the widespread disillusionment caused by the first crash of internet hype around 2000, when the utopian promise of freedom of information was effectively shattered. This led to a scrutiny of the processes by which online communities and mailing lists are formed, and a critique of the gap between their inclusive rhetoric and their actual function of exclusion. Brucker-Cohen and Bennett reacted with an ironic strategy of “deconstructing networks.” It should come as no surprise that any open forum is maintained by a dedicated core of active participants, but to forge a true community is and always will be a matter of persistence, stubbornness, and serendipity. —RF

79 Aaron Koblin The Sheep Market 2006–present / Online project (http://www.thesheepmarket.com) / Courtesy the artist

Anybody can draw sheep; anybody can participate. When it is so simple, many will actually do it. In 2006 Koblin hired thousands of workers on Amazon’s Mechanical Turk service, paying each of them two cents to “draw a sheep facing left.” The result is a collection of almost ten thousand sheep, submitted over a period of forty days, that illustrates the collective force of networked capitalist economies. The average wage per hour was sixty-nine cents, and the average time spent on a single sheep was 105 seconds. Today the sheep are available for sale in the form of adhesive stamps; unique sets of twenty sheep retail for twenty dollars. —RF
In 1992 the Delhi-based documentary filmmakers Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula, and Shuddhabrata Sengupta formed Raqs Media Collective, a cooperative whose work ranges from media art and installations to cultural criticism and curatorial activities. Their name is derived from the Persian, Arabic, and Urdu words for "dance" and the Sufi ritual of whirling; they also like to point out that in English it is an acronym for "rarely asked questions." Fundamental to their practice are the ideas behind the Sarai in Delhi, cofounded in 2000 (with the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies) as a communal space for media production and independent research that is open to the public. Sarai is a Mughal Empire term denoting a refuge for travelers—a place where pilgrims engaged in discussion, dance, theater, music, and other restorative diversions. Raqs has reinterpreted the concept for the twenty-first century, proposing it as a resting place for new media nomads, with an emphasis on hospitality. In 2003 the artists collaborated with the Tokyo-based architecture firm Atelier Bow-Wow on the installation Temporary Autonomous Sarai (pl. 180). To encourage cultural exchange among visitors, they used office supplies and other inexpensive, portable materials to build temporary structures, which housed media equipment and computers displaying online works by various international artists. Participants could reconfigure the spatial arrangement and use the supplies as they wished.

Central to Raqs’ ethos is the facilitation of minority access to resources such as the internet and computer applications. Their support of the free software culture, or the idea of a “digital commons,” is evident on their site Opus (http://www.opuscommons.net). Users can upload media as “source code” to be manipulated by others. Both the original material and the new hybrid work are then accessible. There is similar evidence of remix or mashup in the installation Please do not touch the work of art (2006; pl. 181). The common gallery prohibition is cut up, its fragments repositioned several times. The resulting text is self-referential, like a computer program that relies on generating permutations. Raqs claims that “every culture is a ‘remix’ culture….There is a tendency to think of ‘culture’ in a somewhat precious manner, but this overlooks the fact that in another sense, the growth of moulds, fungi and bacteria are also known as cultures. We like to think of culture in its contagious sense.” —MP.
The art and design collaborative Futurefarmers proposes alternative systems of production, taking a multidisciplinary approach to environmental and community engagement. Their public projects often use the workshop or laboratory—a hybrid artistic, educational, and curatorial model—as an open-source system for playful group activities centered on creative investigation. The Reverse Ark: The Flotsam & the Jetsam evolved over the course of a four-day residency at the Pasadena City College Art Gallery, where Futurefarmers worked with students to assemble an archive of recycled materials. The artists' concept of building an ark touched on notions of limited resources, mass transportation, and global warming. —TZ
Since 1996 the collaborative internet projects of Joachim Blank and Karl Heinz Jeron have reflected on art's relation to the economy and an increasingly mediated society. Their 1999 project re-mail, for example, was an ironic groupware solution that involved the artists anonymously answering unwanted emails forwarded by online participants. In collaboration with Gohlke, the German artistic duo is now updating the 2001 project irst Public White Cube (pls. 183–92) as an online and onsite project for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. On a weekly basis, Blank & Jeron will hold an eBay auction of their gallery real estate. “What will be up for bid...won't be ownership of the customary art objects,” they note, “but rather the right to alter them.” The auctions initiate a series of interventions into existing artworks and the space itself, welcoming destruction as well as creativity.

The group has invited two guest artists—10lb Ape and Ledia Carroll—to separately create art installations for one of the exhibition galleries. Gustavo Herrera and Matt Wardell, on behalf of the Los Angeles–based collective 10lb Ape (see pls. 193–94), will create Your Mother Was Beautiful Once, Part Drei, a temporary structure to be altered over the course of four auctions during the first half of the exhibition. Introduced with a performance by the artists, the shack will incorporate detritus and pamphlets found around Los Angeles. The winning bidders cannot remove anything; instead the space will reveal traces of their cumulative changes. The sequence of auctioned changes repeats with Carroll, who will further her topographical investigations of San Francisco with Sand Dune (pl. 195), a sand sculpture referencing the region's public beaches. Visitors can track the status of the eight auctions on eBay or the artists' website (http://www.publicwhitecube.com). —TZ
UBERMORGEN.COM "Vote-Auction" 2000/2004 / Online project
(http://www.vote-auction.net) / Courtesy the artist and Fabio Paris Art Gallery, Brescia, Italy

The controversial "Vote-Auction" project by the Austrians Hans Bernhard and łazlik allegedly offered Americans the opportunity to auction off their votes in the 2000 presidential election. The online platform was modeled after the server-side technologies and design of online auction services such as eBay. Although the auction website proved to be fictional, it prompted 450 million users to execute several hundred auctions. Not surprisingly, it provoked overwhelming backlash from the mass media and the government, although the resulting legal injunctions were later dropped. With the slogan "Bringing Capital and Democracy Together," this exemplar of digital activism problematized the ways in which big business campaign contributions undermine state and federal laws against the individual selling of votes. — TZ
MTAA

For more than a decade the Brooklyn-based duo M.River & T.Whid Art Associates (Michael Sarff and Tim Whidden) has created participatory projects that bring performance strategies into the realm of online art, reflecting on the digitization of formerly analog techniques. Their Updates series (2001-4), for example, remixes historic durational pieces such as On Kawara’s Today Series (1966–present) and Tehching Hsieh’s One Year Performance (1980-81). Software automates and thereby fakes the process, shifting the onus of labor from the artists to the viewers by proposing that they visit the website over the course of a year.

The artists’ strategy of looking at how online communities affect the production and distribution of art also extends to the gallery or museum context. Automatic for the People: ( ) (2008; pl. 197) allows online and onsite visitors to participate in the creation of a performance at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art by voting on ten components, including the artwork’s location, props, themes, and subtitle. How MTAA articulates the variables in the poll is as much a part of the piece as the final outcome. Kicked off with a performance lecture, the project culminates with the artists’ execution of the “viewers’ choice” at the end of the exhibition. “As a system for art production, democracy could be a path to open experimentation or a road to preordained failure,” they note. “It’s all up to the vote.” In a previous piece embracing failure, ro Pre-Rejected, Pre-Approved Performances (2005), MTAA presented online a list of performance-based artworks that had been rejected by curators at various venues. The piece chosen by voters involved purchasing a hundred dollars’ worth of miscellaneous beer cans, foil, mousetraps, and cupcake wrappers at the nearest deli at midnight. These materials resulted in the ungainly sculpture Midnight in the Deli (pl. 198), which was exhibited at Artists Space, New York, with accompanying video documentation. The artists’ characteristic sense of humor is at play throughout the SFMOMA poll, which nods to the stereotypes surrounding performance art by offering wardrobe options such as “Definitely not naked” and cultural references like “Marcel Duchamp, chat rooms, ukuleles, and takeout food.” Automatic for the People: ( ) encourages us to look at the codes of performance conceptualization rather than just watch the script play out. —TZ
Vitaly Komar and Alex Melamid developed their 1994 Most Wanted and Most Unwanted paintings by taking a statistical approach to national aesthetics. They conducted telephone opinion polls, posing questions about key qualities of popular paintings: “Outdoor or indoor scenes? Realistic or different looking? Sharp angles or soft curves?” The survey presented conclusive evidence that the avant-garde is no match for status quo aesthetic ideals. Perhaps unsurprisingly, American popular taste gravitated toward traditional realist genre painting and the landscape tropes of Sunday painters; abstraction generally proved undesirable. —122
TOROLAB

The border town of Tijuana, Mexico, is the home of Torolab, an art, architecture, and design group directed and founded by Raúl Cárdenas Osuna. This location, a site between developing and developed nations, is a key inspiration for the collective. Its members often create work that responds to the particular, complex urban environment of the border zone. Cárdenas Osuna, who refers to the group as a "workshop-laboratory," is committed to researching social phenomena that might enhance the quality of life for Tijuana residents. The collective is known for a clothing label, ToroVestimenta, whose line includes multipocketed cargo pants that allow the wearer to hide documents or credit cards when crossing the border. Torolab also creates “emergency architecture,” shelters made out of necessity from recycled materials. Another focus of the collective is the facilitation of better community relations.

Since 2001 Torolab has been developing a series of Work Rooms at cultural institutions in various locations. The first iterations took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (2001), the Laboratorio Arte Alameda, Mexico City (2003–4; pl. 201), and the Museum of Craft and Folk Art, San Francisco (2007). Cárdenas Osuna and his collaborators worked with security guards stationed in the galleries, creating different roles for them within the museum environment. Torolab provided them with training in DJing, video recording, and video editing and designed an exhibition space where the guards could display their work. The projects turned the institutional space inside out: those guarding it now contributed to what was exhibited. For Work Room 4 (2008; pl. 202) at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, a published Bay Area author will hold a workshop for museum guards and frontline staff. During the course of the exhibition, these volunteers will be invited to contribute writing to a specially designed blog. Torolab gives voice to the observations of those who work behind the scenes, making visible that which is normally unseen. —MP
Evoking the economic strategy of floating Asian markets, the Thai artist Kusolwong brings the product to the consumer. Since the mid-1990s (most notably at the 1998 Sydney Biennale), he has installed variations on itinerant markets at a number of international venues. On May 26, 2006, as part of the Long Weekend live arts festival at the Tate Modern, London, Kusolwong presented the performance installation *One Pound Turbo Market (You'll have a good time)*. He filled the museum’s vast Turbine Hall with thousands of colorful, mass-produced toys and household goods from Thailand, accompanied by a soundtrack of Thai pop. Flea market and art market converged as visitors bought the imported items for one pound each. —MP
The forms of interaction that defined most media art of the 1990s produced many installations that were technically challenging yet lacked the qualities necessary to move and engage viewers on a deeper level. The Mexican media artist Lozano-Hemmer first became known in that decade for staging large-scale interactive installations, works that were not only technologically advanced, but also accessible, poetic, and open to the contribution of the public. Since 1997 his Relational Architecture series has addressed such interaction via the bodily presence of passersby (in re:positioning fear [1997], for example, which tracked and projected the shadows of visitors and incorporated real-time chats related to the topic of fear), databases (the textual tags projected onto visitors in Subtitled Public [2005]), and radio broadcast (as in Frequency and Volume [2003], which enabled viewers to use their bodies as surfaces and transmitters of information).

The spoken word, however, has a much stronger physical presence than any projected image or text. Nothing speaks louder than a person who steps up to a microphone onstage under a spotlight. The microphone is the embodiment of public speech, and Lozano-Hemmer’s Microphones (2008; pls. 204–5) enacts the idea of an invisible stage. In this interactive installation vintage 1939 Shure microphones are placed on stands at different heights; each microphone has been modified so that its head contains a tiny loudspeaker and a circuit board connected to a network of hidden computers. When someone speaks into a microphone, it records his or her voice and immediately plays back a recording of a previous participant, as an echo of the past and a memory of all recordings made during the exhibition. The microphone “talks back,” creating a situation in which participants can overcome the urge to sound test the equipment and instead productively engage with the installation, leaving an acoustic trace or joining others in the aural equivalent of a surrealist game of “exquisite corpse.” All content is generated entirely by the participation of the public and is stored as a memento of a specific period in time. The gallery in turn becomes a stage, a recording studio, a listening device, a platform for interaction. —RF
Scott Snibbe *Blow Up* 2005 / Installation view at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, 2005 / Aluminum, steel, commercial fan parts, motors, impellers, custom electronics, and software / Courtesy the artist

One of the San Francisco Bay Area's most active media artists, Snibbe has produced a series of interactive installations that visualize relationships between participants. *Blow Up* invites the viewer to blow into a set of twelve small impellers, which “record,” amplify, and play back his or her exhalation on a wall of twelve large fans. The fans continue to play back the last breathing pattern until someone inspires a new one. What starts as the minimal movement of breathing is translated into a powerful wind, physically challenging other visitors. —RF
guarded as art objects. "Accocon's Service Area," an activity performed on various days at irregular times, was featured in the landmark exhibition "Information," organized by Kynaston McShine for the Museum of Modern Art, New York (July 2–September 20, 1970). See ibid., 168–69.


120 could replace the painting. John Baldessari, quoted in Jan DeBapt, John Baldessari (Eindhoven, Netherlands: Van Abbemuseum; Essen, Germany: Museum Folkwang, 1985), 11.


122 the device of time delay. Dan Graham's closed-circuit video installations frequently make use of five- to eight-second delays, a duration that the artist believes corresponds to the limit of short-term memory.

125 natural and pedestrian movement. Joan Jonas was taking an experimental dance workshop with Trisha Brown when she staged "Mirror Piece I" (1969) at the Loeb Student Center at New York University. Brown was a member of the pioneering Judson Dance Theater, which included Steve Paxton, Deborah Hay, and Simone Forti. Jonas's performance work also draws from the task-oriented performance of happenings and integrates elements from Japanese Noh and Kabuki theater.


126 MOMA-Poll. This Haacke work was presented as part of the 1970 exhibition "Information at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.


130 art as social sculpture. "The concept of sculpture," wrote Joseph Beuys, "can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone." Caroline Tisdall, Joseph Beuys (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1979), 72.


130 7000 Eichen. For a full description of Beuys's project, see http://www.diaart.org/ltpce/7000 (accessed May 7, 2008).


136 important in the fifties. Ibid.

140 media-based performance. The late 1970s witnessed a number of satellite and telecommunication projects—by figures such as Douglas Davis, Robert Adrian X (see pl. 113), Willoughby Sharp, Keith Sonnier, and Liza Bear, among others—that either featured artists as a part of an event or used recordings of the public to examine the art exhibition context. At the time, video conferencing had not yet reached the masses and satellite was the only viable means of transmitting television-quality video overseas. Since they did not rely on video technology, which was relatively affordable, ambitious satellite projects required considerable coordination with large companies and foundations for support.

140 a day of rest. Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz deliberately inserted an off day during the event, partly as an attempt to sustain an aspect of discovery for unsuspecting participants and partly to thwart art-world insiders.


143 The World in 24 Hours. The cities involved in Robert Adrian X's project were Vienna, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Bath, Welfleet, Pittsburgh, Toronto, San Francisco, Vancouver, Honolulu, Tokyo, Sydney, Istanbul, and Athens. Each location was called from Linz at 12:00 a.m. local time, the project thus began at noon (Central European Time) on September 23 and, following the midday sun around the world, ended at noon on September 28. See http://alien.mur.at/tax/BIO/telecom.html (accessed May 7, 2008).

144 The File Room. This project was initiated by Antoni Muntadas and produced by Randolph Street Gallery in collaboration with the School of Art and Design, University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Department of Cultural Affairs—City of Chicago. The site is maintained by the National Coalition Against Censorship.


148 the uniqueness of the art object. Many of Felix Gonzales-Torres's artworks are purely conceptual objects; they exist only in the form of certificates of authenticity and instructions for reproducing endless copies.

148 eventual disappearance. In conversations with Tim Rollins on April 16 and June 12, 1993, Gonzales-Torres commented: "In a way this 'letting go' of the work, this refusal to make a static form, a monolithic sculpture, in favor of a disappearing, changing, unstable, and fragile form was an attempt on my part to rehearse the fears of having Ross disappear day by day in front of my eyes." Felix Gonzales-Torres (Los Angeles: A.R.T. Press, 1993), 13.


166 The Battle of Orgreave. In 1984 the National Union of Mineworkers went on strike, a bitter dispute that lasted for more than a year. The Battle of Orgreave is a reenactment of one of the strike's most violent confrontations, which occurred at the Orgreave coking plant (it began in a field near the plant and culminated in a cavalry charge through the village). Jeremy Deller's project was orchestrated by Howard Giles, a historical reenactment expert and the former director of English Heritage's event program; was filmed under the direction of Mike Figgis for Artangel Media and Channel 4; and aired by the BBC on October 20, 2002. See http://www.artangel.org.uk/pages/past/02/02_deller.htm (accessed May 26, 2008).

166 by coincidence I became a sculptor. This and all quotes by Erwin Wurm are from Erwin Wurm: The Artist Who Swallowed the World (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2006).
a collective memory ... [a] soft portrait Jochen Gerz, unpublished exhibition notes compiled by Le Foyer, Studio national des arts contemporains, Tours, France, ca. 2000 (author’s translation). 

Je et Nous For more on Sylvia Blescher’s work (including stills showing other volunteers’ T-shirts), see Rudolf Frielings, New Work: Sylvia Blescher, exhibition brochure (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2007).

Campement Urbain The interdisciplinary collective was founded in 1997 by Blescher and the urban planner François Daune. See http://www.campementurbain.org (accessed June 27, 2008).

Usenet newsgroups Usenet is a computer network communications system established in 1980. It is still in widespread use, though its cultural significance has diminished with the rise of internet forums, weblogs, and mailing lists.


e-mail program Conversation Map is used like conventional programs such as Eudora and Netscape Messenger. The software arrived after the emergence of Mosaic and other graphical browsers, which altered how users could comprehend what was happening on the internet.

technology of the self Sack, 30.

Poetica Giselle Beiguelman’s artwork was presented in São Paulo in 2003 and in Berlin in 2004. See http://www.poetica.net.


The Telephone Call Janet Cardiff’s video walk was originally commissioned for the exhibition 010101: Art in Technological Times at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (March 3–July 8, 2003).


speak for (and hang) itself In Little Frank and His Corp (2001), Fraser humorously takes the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao up on its offer, via the audio tour, to touch the sensuous curves of Frank Gehry’s architectural attraction. See ibid., 233-60.

The Daniels Hotel Lynn Hershman Leeson’s installation of mixed-media objects, wax figures, and audio was housed in a room at a low-rent hotel in San Francisco from November 30, 1973, through August 31, 1974. She rented room 47, room 47 was taken by her friend Eleanor Coppola, who hired another friend, Tony Dingman, to live in the space and be watched. Nine months after Hershman Leeson’s room opened to the public, a 2 a.m. visitor mistook the wax bodies to be corpses and phoned the police, who seized the room’s contents and took them to central headquarters. The documentation of the project is now housed in the Department of Special Collections at Stanford University. When Life is exhibited as an installation, the artist presents selected documentation from this archive in vitrines, along with computers offering online access to the project.

Store windows Hershman Leeson’s Forming a Sculpture/Drama in Manhattan was sited at the YWCA, the Chelsea Hotel, and the Plaza Hotel, New York, in 1974. Another New York installation, 25 Windows: A Portrait of Bowery, Teller, appeared in the department store’s display windows from October 18 through November 2, 1976.

which we call Shifts http://www.shiftspace.org/rhizome (accessed May 26, 2008).

if they are bumped off http://www.bumplist.net (accessed May 26, 2008).


culture in its contagious sense Rags, interview with Johan Piroppe, in Icon: India Contemporary (New York: Rube Pacea, 2005), 31.

Futurefarmers Founded in 1995 by the San Francisco–based new media artist Amy Franceschini, Futurefarmers has a variable composition of collaborators for different projects. Franceschini and two core Futurefarmers’ associates, Michael Swaine and Stijn Schifflers, organized The Reverse Ark: The Flotsam & the Jetsam during their 2008 residency at Pasadena City College, California. For more on the project, see http://www.futurefarmers.com/reverseark (accessed June 20, 2008).

Public White Cube The first iteration of this project was part of a 2001 solo exhibition at Galerie M. Kampf, Berlin, featuring installations by guest artists Adib Fricke, Peter Friedl, and Torsten Hattenke.


IVote Auction After the Chicago Board of Elections Commissioners filed a lawsuit against the creators of the project—then known as IVote-auction.com—on October 8, 2000, the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, issued an injunction against the website, naming the company that registered the domain as a codefendant. The domain company promptly shut it down. A week later the project reappeared as Vote-auction.com, a URL that was cancelled by the Swiss domain name registrar. Today the project, including an archive of legal documents and media coverage, can be found at http://www.vote-auction.net.

Updates For more on this MTAA work, see http://www.mteww.com/updates/ (accessed May 26, 2008).

It’s all up to the vote MTAA, proposal for the exhibition The Art of Participation at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, February 1, 2008.

Pre-Rejected, Pre-Approved Performances MTAA’s project was included in ARTISTS SPACE: Empty Space with Exciting Events Performance, presented at Artists Space, New York, in conjunction with Performa ’05 (December 13–17, 2005).

Catalogue of the Exhibition
The below catalogue represents the best available information at the time of publication. In the case of art collectives, whose composition may change over time, every effort has been made to identify the founding and/or current members contributing to each project. URLs cited herein may change or become invalid after the close of the exhibition.

Abramović/Ulay
Serbian, b. 1946; German, b. 1943

Imponderabilia [compilation version], 1977 (pls. 52–55) / Single-channel black-and-white video with sound, 9:50 min. / Courtesy the artist and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York

Vito Acconci
American, b. 1940

Proximity Piece, 1970, printed 2008 (pls. 58–59) / Digital pigment prints mounted on board / 68 × 22 in. (172.7 × 55.9 cm) / Courtesy Acconci Studio

Francis Alÿs
Belgian, b. 1959
(in collaboration with Rafael Ortega)

Re-enactments, 2001 (pls. 133–38) / Two-channel color video installation with sound, 5:20 min. / Dimensions variable / Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner Gallery, New York

John Baldessari
American, b. 1931

Terms Most Useful in Describing Creative Works of Art, 1966–68 (pl. 62) / Acrylic on canvas / 113½ × 96 in. (288.9 × 243.8 cm) / Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, gift of John Oldenkamp

Joseph Beuys
German, 1921–1986

Intuition, 1968 (pl. 17) / Wood, graphite, and metal staples / 11¾ × 8¼ × 1½ in. (29.7 × 21 × 5 cm) / Collection of Dare and Themistocles Michos, San Francisco

La rivoluzione siamo noi (We Are the Revolution), 1972 (pl. 77) / Screen print on polyester with handwritten text, ed. 149/180 / 75¼ × 40¼ in. (191 × 102 cm) / Collection of Pamela and Richard Kramlich, San Francisco

Excerpt from Documenta 6 Satellite Telecast, 1977 (pl. 76) / Single-channel color video with sound, approx. 9 min. / Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

Joseph Beuys, Bazon Brock, Rolf Jähring, Ute Klophaus, Charlotte Moorman, Nam June Paik, Eckard Rahn, Tomas Schmit, and Wolf Vostell
German, 1921–1986; German, b. 1936; German, 1913–1991; German, b. 1940; American, 1933–1991; American, b. South Korea, 1932–2006; German, b. 1944; German, 1943–2006; German, 1932–1998

24-Stunden (24 Hours), 1965 (pl. 14) / Offset lithography, plastic, and flour (catalogue of a happening at Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany, June 5, 1965) / 4¼ × 3 × 2 in. (10.8 × 7.6 × 5.1 cm) / Special Collections, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Research Library

Blank & Jeron and Gerrit Gohlke
Joachim Blank: German, b. 1963; Karl Heinz Jeron: German, b. 1962; Gerrit Gohlke: German, b. 1968

1st Public White Cube, 2001/2008 (pls. 183–92) / Online project (http://www.publicwhitecube.com), eBay auctions, and winning bidders’ interventions into mixed-media installations by guest artists / Dimensions variable / Support provided by the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations), Stuttgart, Germany / Courtesy the artists

Guest artist installations by 10lb Ape (Gustavo Herrera: American, b. 1975; Matt Wardell: American, b. 1976), Your Mother Was Beautiful Once, Part Three, 2008; Ledia Carroll (American, b. 1974, Guatemala), Sand Dune, 2008

George Brecht
American, b. 1926

Toward Events, 1959 (pl. 6) / Offset lithography on paper bag (announcement for an exhibition at Reuben Gallery, New York, October 16–November 5, 1959) / 9½ × 6¼ in. (25.3 × 15.8 cm) / Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Germany

Direction: A Fluxgame, 1963/69 / Fluxus edition: plastic box and offset lithography / 34 × 33 × 1½ in. (12 × 9.3 × 1.7 cm) / Label designed by George Maciunas / The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit

Water Yam, 1963 (pl. 6) / Fluxus edition: cardboard box and offset lithography (sixty-nine cards) / 8½ × 8½ × 1½ in. (21.6 × 21.6 × 3.8 cm) / Label designed by George Maciunas / The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit

Universal Machine, 1965 (pl. 7) / MAT MOT edition: cloth-covered box, offset lithography, glass, buttons, stainless-steel ball bearing, balsa wood, wood toothpicks, glass beads, metal hook and eye, brass washer, and iron snap clamp, ed. 73/100 / 11 × 8 × 1½ in. (28 × 20.3 × 3.8 cm) / The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit

Deck: A Fluxgame, 1966 (pl. 5) / Fluxus edition: plastic box and offset lithography (sixty-four laminated cards) / 2¼ × 3½ × ½ in. (6.7 × 9.3 × 2.3 cm) / Label designed by George Maciunas / The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit

Jonah Brucker-Cohen and Mike Bennett
American, b. 1975; Irish, b. 1977

BumpList: An email community for the determined, 2003 (pls. 177–78) / Online email list (http://www.bumplist.net) / Courtesy the artists
John Cage
American, 1912–1992
4'33", 1952 (pl. 1) / Musical score with handwritten notes by David Tudor / 12% × 9½ in. (3.18 × 2.41 cm) / Courtesy the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

4'33", excerpt from A Tribute to John Cage by Nam June Paik, 1973–76 (pl. 3) / Single-channel color video with sound, 3:55 min. / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Camille W. and William S. Broadbent Fund

Cal and Johannes Gees

communimage, 1999–present (pl. 153) / Online project (http://www.communimage.net) / Original website development supported by Swiss National Exposition Expo 2002. Additional support for 2008 website redesign from Empresa Pública de Gestión de Programas Culturales, Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, Seville, Spain, and Amt der Vorarlberger Landesregierung, Bregenz, Austria / Courtesy the artists

communimage—a moment in time VI, 2008 / Digital pigment print on Sintra / Approx. 204 × 257½ in. (518.2 × 653 cm) / Courtesy the artists

Janet Cardiff
Canadian, b. 1957
The Telephone Call, 2001 (pls. 159–60) / Audio and video walk through the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: digital video, mini DV camera, and headphones, 17 min. / Dimensions variable / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, purchased through a gift of Pamela and Dick Kramlich and the Accessions Committee Fund; gift of Jean and James E. Douglas Jr., Carla Emil and Rich Silverstein, Patricia and Raoul Kennedy, Phyllis and Stuart G. Moldaw, Lenore Pereira-Niles and Richard Niles, and Judy and John Webb

Lygia Clark
Brazilian, 1920–1988
Diálogo de mãos (Hand Dialogue), 1966/2008 (pl. 42) / Elastic / 6¾ × 1 ¾ in. (16.8 × 1.9 cm) / Clark Family Collection, Rio de Janeiro

Máscaras sensoriais (Sensorial Masks), 1967 (pl. 40) / Cloth masks with ear devices and goguttgart, fabric, metal, seeds, plastic, polyethylene, mirrors, glass, shells, steel wool, sponge, and tissue / Six masks, each: approx. 25% × 19% × 2% in. (65 × 50 × 6 cm) / Clark Family Collection, Rio de Janeiro

Diálogo: Óculos (Dialogue: Goggles), 1966/2008 (pl. 41) / Modified diving goguttgart, metal, and mirror / 3 × 7 × 11 in. (7.5 × 18 × 29 cm) / Clark Family Collection, Rio de Janeiro

Rede de elástico (Elastic Net), 1973/2008 (pl. 26–39) / Rubber / Dimensions variable / Clark Family Collection, Rio de Janeiro

The World of Lygia Clark, 1973 (pl. 37–38, 42) / Black-and-white video with sound, 27 min. / Directed by Eduardo Clark / Clark Family Collection, Rio de Janeiro

Minerva Cuevas
Mexican, b. 1975
Mejor Vida Corp., 1998–present (pls. 130–31) / Online project (http://www.irational.org/mvc) / Courtesy the artist

Maria Eichhorn
German, b. 1962
Prohibited Imports, 2003 (pl. 117) / Offset lithography (twenty-five books and three magazines), glass, and wood / 30½ × 18½ × 15 in. (77.7 × 47.2 × 38.2 cm) / Collection of the artist

VALIE EXPORT
Austrian, b. 1940
Selected documentation of TAPPund TASTKINO (TAP and TOUCH CINEMA), 1968–69 (pls. 49–50) / Generali Foundation, Vienna

Konzept VALIE EXPORT, Der Bogen als Leinwand (Concept VALIE EXPORT, The Breathe as Screen), 1968, printed 2008 / Digital pigment print / 9¾ × 7¼ in. (24 × 18 cm)

Zweites TAPPund TASTKINO (Second TAP and TOUCH CINEMA), 1968/1998 / Aluminum and foam / 23½ × 13 × 20 in. (59.9 × 33.5 × 52.5 cm) / Fabricated by Wolfgang Ernst

TAPP und TASTKINO (TAP and TOUCH CINEMA), 1969 / Single-channel black-and-white video with sound, 1:20 min. / Performed by VALIE EXPORT; narrated by Peter Weibel; edited by Wolfgang Hajek and Helmut Dimko; produced by ORF/ZDF for Apropos Film

Harrell Fletcher and Jon Rubin
American, b. 1967; American, b. 1963
Pictures Collected from Museum Visitors’ Wallets, 1998 (pls. 123–24) / Chromogenic prints / Ten prints, each: 40 × 30 in. (101.6 × 76.2 cm) / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, purchased through a gift of the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation

Fluxus Collective
Active 1960s–late 1970s
Fluxkit, 1965–66 (pls. 15–16) / Fluxus edition: vinyl attaché case, metal hinges, and silkscreen (contains various Fluxus objects) / 12½ × 16¼ × 4¾ in. (32 × 43 × 12.5 cm) / Assembled by George Maciunas / The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit

Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz
American, b. 1948; American, b. 1950
Hole-in-Space, 1980/2008 (pls. 90–91) / Two-channel black-and-white video projection with sound, approx. 360 min. (re-creation using original footage from a live two-way telecommunication event at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, and Century City Shopping Center, Los Angeles, November 11, 13, and 14, 1980) / Dimensions variable / Courtesy the artists
Jochen Gerz  
German, b. 1940

The Gift, 2000/2008 (pls. 147–49) / Digital photography studio, production lab, digital pigment prints, and newspaper advertisements / Each photograph: 23¾ x 19¾ in. (60 x 50 cm); overall dimensions variable / Courtesy Gerz Studio

Matthias Gommel  
German, b. 1970

Delayed, 2002 (pl. 157) / Closed-circuit sound installation / Dimensions variable / Courtesy the artist

Felix Gonzalez-Torres  
Cuban, 1957–1996


Dan Graham  
American, b. 1942

Poem, n.d. / Ink on paper / 9 x 6 in. (22.9 x 15.2 cm) / The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

Schema for a Set of Pages, 1966 / Offset lithography / 8½ x 5½ in. (21.6 x 14 cm) / The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

Performer/Audience/Mirror, 1977 (pl. 64) / Single-channel black-and-white video with sound, 22:52 min. / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Camille W. and William S. Broadbent Fund

Double Cylinder (The Kiss), 1994 (pl. 65) / Two-way mirror, glass, and steel / Each cylinder: 96 x 96 x 96 in. (243.8 x 243.8 x 243.8 cm) / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Accessions Committee Fund: gift of Frances and John Bowes, Emily L. Carroll, Collectors Forum, Jean and Jim Douglas, Susan and Robert Green, Jerome S. Markowitz and Maria Monet Markowitz, Elaine McKeon, and Norah and Norman Stone

Hans Haacke  
German, b. 1936

News, 1969/2008 (pl. 70) / RSS newsfeed, paper, and printer / Dimensions variable / Collection of the artist

Lynn Hershman Leeson  
American, b. 1941

Selected documentation of The Dante Hotel, 1973–74 (pl. 171) / Gelatin silver prints, chromogenic prints, newspaper clippings, and ink on paper / Each document: approx. 8 x 10 in. (20 x 25 cm) / Department of Special Collections, Stanford University, California

Life+, 2006–present (figs. 29–30, pls. 168–70) / Online project (http://slurl.com/secondlife/NEWare/28/28/0) / Project management and development by Henrik Bennetsen with Jeff Aldrich and Henry Segerman; principal research by Henry Lowood and Michael Shanks, Stanford Humanities Lab; additional support by Roberto Trujillo and Peter Blank, Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries / Collection of the artist

Allan Kaprow  
American, 1927–2006

Hello, excerpt from The Medium Is the Message, 1969 (pls. 29–34) / Single-channel black-and-white video with sound, 4:85 min. / Produced by WGBH, Boston / Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

Henning Lohner and Van Carlson  
American, b. Germany, 1961; American, b. 1950

43° in Berlin (with John Cage), raw material video pictures cat. # 001, 1990 / Single-channel color video with sound, 4:33 min. / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, gift of the artists and Galerie Springer & Winckler, Berlin

Chip Lord, Curtis Schreier, and Bruce Tomb  
American, b. 1944; American, b. 1944; American, b. 1958

Ant Farm Media Van v.08 (Time Capsule), 2008 (pl. 87) / Customized 1972 Chevy C10 van, mixed media, video, computer, custom electronics, and custom software / 84 x 79 x 192 in. (213.4 x 200.7 x 487.7 cm) / Support provided by Headlands Center for the Arts, Marin, California / Courtesy the artists, commissioned by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer  
Mexican, b. 1967

Microphones, 2008 (pls. 204–5) / Interactive installation with modified microphones, computers, electronics, and custom software / Dimensions variable / Programming by Gideon May / Courtesy the artist

Tom Marioni  
American, b. 1937

FREE BEER (The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends Is the Highest Form of Art), 1970–79 / Refrigerator, framed print, shelf, beer bottles, and lightbulb / 114 x 114 x 60 in. (289.6 x 289.6 x 152.4 cm) / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, anonymous gift

The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends Is the Highest Form of Art, 1970–2008 (pl. 82) / Site-specific installation with functioning bar / Dimensions variable / Courtesy the artist

MTAA (M. River & T. Whidt Art Associates)  
Michael Sarff; American, b. 1967; Tim Whidden; American, b. 1969

Automatic for the People: ( ), 2008 (pl. 197) / Online project (http://mtaa.net/vote) and performance at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art / Dimensions variable / Courtesy the artists, commissioned by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Antoni Muntadas  
Spanish, b. 1942

The File Room, 1994–present / Online project (http://www.thefileroom.org) / Courtesy the artist

Yoko Ono  
Japanese, b. 1933

Cut Piece, 1965 (pl. 45) / 16mm black-and-white film transferred to video, 9 min. / Courtesy the artist

Cut Piece, 2003 (pl. 46) / Single-channel color video with sound, 16 min. / Courtesy the artist
Nam June Paik
American, b. South Korea, 1932–2006
*Participation IV*, 1963/1998 / Manipulated television, signal amplifiers, and microphone / Dimensions variable / Nam June Paik Art Center, Korea

Dan Phiffer and Mushon Zer-Aviv
American, b. 1980; Israeli, b. 1976
*ShiftSpace*, 2007–present (pl. 174) / Online project (http://www.shiftspace.org/rhizome) / Courtesy the artists

Raqs Media Collective
Jeebesh Bagchi: Indian, b. 1955; Monica Narula: Indian, b. 1969; Shuddhabrata Sengupta: Indian, b. 1968
*Please do not touch the work of art*, 2006 (pl. 181) / Adhesive vinyl and offset lithography / Each card: 4 × 6 in. (10.2 × 15.2 cm); overall dimensions variable / Courtesy the artists

Robert Rauschenberg
American, 1925–2008
*White Painting* (Three Panel), 1951 (pl. 4) / Oil on canvas / 72 × 108 in. (182.9 × 274.3 cm) / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, purchased through a gift of Phyllis Wattis

Warren Sack
American, b. 1962
*Conversation Map*, 2000 (pl. 155) / Online project (http://people.ucsc.edu/~wsack/conversationmap) / Courtesy the artist

Mieko Shiomi
Japanese, b. 1938
*Spatial Poem No. 1*, 1965 (pl. 20) / Fluxus edition: stenciled map on painted composition board, masking tape, pins, and offset lithography (sixty-nine cards) / 11⅞ × 18 × ⅛ in. (30.3 × 45.7 × 2.3 cm) / Assembled by George Maciunas / The Gilbert and Lisa Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit

Tololab
Raúl Cárdenas Osura: Mexican, b. 1969
*Work Room 4*, 2008 (pl. 202) / Collaborative writing project and weblog (http://www.work-room.net) / Courtesy the artist, commissioned by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Wolf Vostell
German, 1932–1998
*Petit Ceinture* (Small Loop), 1962 / Offset lithography (invitation to a happening in Paris, July 3, 1962) / 5⅞ × 9⅞ in. (14.5 × 24 cm) / Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Germany

*Do it yourself*, 1963
*Decollagen*, 1963
Typed invitation and score (documentation of a happening at Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany, September 14, 1963) / Invitation: 4⅞ × 8 in. (12.6 × 20.3 cm); score: 11⅞ × 8⅞ in. (29.7 × 21.4 cm) / Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Germany

You—A Decollage Happening, 1964 (pl. 13) / Typed score, ink, gouache, and spray paint on cardboard (documentation of a happening in Great Neck, New York, April 19, 1964) / Score: 11 × 8½ in. (28 × 21.5 cm); "psychogram": 19⅛ × 23⅞ in. (50 × 60 cm) / Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Germany

Andy Warhol
American, 1928–1987
*Do It Yourself*, 1962 (pl. 10) / Colored crayon on paper / 25 × 18 in. (63.5 × 45.7 cm) / Princeton University Art Museum, courtesy Sonnabend Collection

Stephen Willats
British, b. 1943
*A Moment of Action*, 1974 (pls. 72–74) / Gelatin silver prints, gouache, ink, and Letraset mounted on card stock with questionnaire and clipboard / Six panels, each: 25 × 16 in. (63.5 × 40.6 cm); overall dimensions variable / Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery

Erwin Wurm
Austrian, b. 1954
*One Minute Sculptures*, 1997 (pls. 141–42) / Chromogenic prints / Thirty-two prints, each: 26⅞ × 20½ in. (68 × 52 cm) (framed) / Collection of the artist

*Keep a cool head*, 2003 (pl. 144) / Refrigerator and instruction drawing / 33⅛ × 19⅞ × 24 in. (85 × 50 × 61 cm) / Collection of the artist

*One Minute Sculptures*, 2007/2008 / Performative objects and instruction drawings on pedestal / Dimensions variable / Collection of the artist

*The trap of the truth*, 2007/2008 / Performative objects on shelf and instruction drawing / Dimensions variable / Collection of the artist
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This new survey covers the rich and varied history of participatory art, from early happenings and performances to current practices that demand audience interaction. As the hallmarks of Web 2.0—browsing, sharing, collecting, producing—increasingly permeate every aspect of society, this timely project reveals the ways in which artists and viewers have approached the creation of open works of art. The featured artists include Abramovic/Ulay, Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, John Cage, Janet Cardiff, Lygia Clark, Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz, Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, Allan Kaprow, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Antoni Muntadas, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, and Erwin Wurm.

Original essays by Rudolf Frieling, Boris Groys, Robert Atkins, and Lev Manovich identify seminal moments in participatory practice from the 1950s to the present day. Hundreds of color illustrations introduce work by all the artists in the accompanying exhibition, with reproductions of significant projects by other major figures—from Hélio Oiticica, Joan Jonas, and Gordon Matta-Clark to Komar & Melamid and Gabriel Orozco—rounding out the survey.

Rudolf Frieling is curator of media arts at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.