Yoko Ono: *Everson Catalog Box*, 1971;
wooden box (designed by George
Maciunas) containing artist's book,
glass key, offset printing on paper,
acrylic on canvas, and plastic boxes;
6 × 6¼ × 7¼ in.; BAMPFA, museum
purchase: Bequest of Thérèse Bonney,
Class of 1916, by exchange. Photo: Sibila
Savage.

COVER Stephen Kaltenbach: *Art Works*,
1968–2005; bronze; 4⅞ × 7⅞ × ⅝ in.;
BAMPFA, museum purchase: Bequest
of Thérèse Bonney, Class of 1916, by
exchange. Photo: Benjamin Blackwell.

Mind Over Matter: Conceptual Art from the Collection

University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive

October 19–December 23, 2016

Mind Over Matter: Conceptual Art from the Collection is organized by BAMPFA Adjunct Curator Constance M. Lewallen.
The exhibition is supported in part by Alexandra Bowes and Stephen Williamson, Rena Bransten, and Robin Wright
and Ian Reeves.

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Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: *Aveugle Voix*, 1975; performance, 23 Bluxome Street, San Francisco (rehearsal, Greek Theater, Berkeley); black-and-white photograph; 10 × 8 in.; BAMPFA, gift of the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Memorial Foundation.
Photo: Trip Callaghan.

Director's Foreword

LAWRENCE RINDER

Mind Over Matter celebrates BAMPFA's exceptional collection of Conceptual art and related material, including artist-designed ephemera, performance documentation, Fluxus art works, and mail art. It has also served to deepen our engagement with UC Berkeley undergraduate education by providing students with access to original works of art and the opportunity to work with leading scholars on developing a public exhibition.

Although BAMPFA had exhibited Conceptual, performance, and mail art since the 1960s, we didn't begin collecting in earnest until the early 1990s. In 1992 we announced plans for the creation of the Conceptual Art Study Center, the first of its kind in any museum in the United States, which was supported by a generous donation by the family of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. One of the first acquisitions was the archive of the Museum of Conceptual Art (MOCA). MOCA was a project of the San Francisco–based artist Tom Marioni that in its fourteen years of operation (1970–84) featured seminal exhibitions of Conceptual, performance, sound, video, and body art. Other critical acquisitions that form the core of BAMPFA's Conceptual art collection include the archives of art collective Ant Farm and artists Theresa Hak Kyung Cha and Lowell Darling.

The San Francisco–based art dealer and collector Steven Leiber facilitated many of BAMPFA's key acquisitions of Conceptual art, including the MOCA archive. Steven was among the world's most knowledgeable people in the field. He made an important mark on art history by drawing attention to the importance of previously under-recognized artist-designed ephemera (posters, announcements, etc.) in the groundbreaking 2001 exhibition *Extra Art: A Survey of Artists' Ephemera, 1960–1999*, which opened at the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, and then traveled to the Institute of Contemporary Art in London. Steven was also known for making his extraordinary collection available to scholars and, especially, students, whom he welcomed to his unusual gallery, a converted garage in his grandmother's basement. When Steven passed away in 2012, BAMPFA made a commitment to keep his unparalleled collection in the Bay Area and to maintain Steven's spirit of access and engagement. Thanks to the generosity of several donors and the Steven Leiber Trust, BAMPFA was able to acquire Steven's Conceptual art collection as well as his library of artist's books and Conceptual art reference books. This material is now housed and made accessible in the Steven Leiber Conceptual Art Study Center.

I am tremendously grateful to BAMPFA Adjunct Curator Constance Lewallen for organizing this exhibition focused on our Conceptual art holdings. *Mind Over Matter* is one of several shows spotlighting key areas of strength in BAMPFA's collection during the inaugural year in our new downtown Berkeley building. I'm thrilled that UC Berkeley professor Julia Bryan-Wilson collaborated with Connie by inviting her undergraduate seminar to engage with and write about a selection of works for the exhibition. This was an exceptional opportunity for students to work with two deeply knowledgeable scholars and a collection of virtually unparalleled breadth and depth. Also on BAMPFA's staff, Academic Liaison Lynne Kimura and Assistant Curator Stephanie Cannizzo contributed significantly to the development of the project. Their expertise and ongoing dedication to this collection is essential and much appreciated.

I would also like to thank the many donors of art and financial resources who have made this collection and study center possible. The funders of this exhibition include Alexandra Bowes and Stephen Williamson, Rena Bransten, and Robin Wright and Ian Reeves. We are grateful to them all for their support.

Students enrolled in the special curatorial component of the UC Berkeley course Contemporary Art in the Americas

Front row (left to right):
Danielle Belanger, Haili Wang, Associate Professor Julia Bryan-Wilson, BAMPFA Adjunct Curator Constance Lewallen

Middle row (left to right):
Tobias Rosen, Gabriel Carr, Samantha Agoncillo, Taylor Osman, Danielle Caro, Ryan Serpa

Top row (left to right):
Carlos Mendez, Emily Szasz, Byung Kwon (B. K.) Kim

Not pictured: Ellen Pong

Mind Over Matter: The Collaboration

JULIA BRYAN-WILSON

The instant that I heard that the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive had acquired the vast Steven Leiber collection of Conceptual art, adding to its already significant holdings in that area, I began to think about how best to integrate these rich resources into my teaching. There is no substitute for having students engage materially with objects, to see up close how photographs, flyers, and letters lend texture to the study of recent art history. I was eager to find a way to access the collection for my fall 2016 undergraduate lecture course at UC Berkeley, Contemporary Art in the Americas. Because I am especially compelled by the frictions generated around collecting ostensibly "dematerialized" material such as Conceptual art documentation and performance ephemera, I knew I wanted the class to concentrate on art movements for which this tension has been central.

Thus I was delighted when I learned that one of the world's leading experts in Conceptual art, BAMPFA Adjunct Curator Constance Lewallen, was going to be organizing an exhibition highlighting the museum's Conceptual art collection. Connie and I began talking about a collaboration that would give students unique and intimate access to the curatorial process as well as make use of their scholarly skills, as we would work with them to pursue independent writing projects focused on works in the collection. In other words, we always intended for the process to be mutually enriching—the exhibition would be strengthened as a result of the student's collective research, and the course would be enhanced as a result of their encounters with the exhibition in process.

Students applied for this special curatorial component of the class, and Connie and I selected twelve students to participate; they came from a diverse range of majors that included history of art, art practice, physics, and ethnic studies. We met as a group six times over the course of the semester: first, to tour the new BAMPFA building before it opened to the public to get a sense of the spatial scope of the exhibition, and then four times to view and handle objects that were being considered for the checklist. I also convened a final meeting to discuss writing topics and research strategies to help guide students as they worked on their essays. I was especially excited that the collaboration would culminate in this publication, which might propel some of these talented undergraduates to think seriously about pursuing further work in art history or museum studies.

Along with Connie, Assistant Curator Stephanie Cannizzo and Academic Liaison Lynne Kimura at BAMPFA were exceptionally accommodating and generous as they facilitated these meetings, and we spent many hours together poring over exhibition announcements, peeling back delicate tissue paper from photos, putting on gloves to turn the pages of artists' books, and opening old file folders to read personal correspondence. Some highlights included seeing the minute details of mail art envelopes, examining Fluxus games, and opening up a rebus-like Yoko Ono exhibition catalog and finding a clear glass key hidden in a drawer. Together we watched artists' videos and tried to decipher the messy handwriting scrawled across photo-text works. Connie shared her extensive knowledge and encouraged students to think critically and synthetically across media and movements to see new connections between artists who are not always seen in relation to one another. We also discussed some of the logistical problems involved in exhibiting this kind of material, and students shared their thoughts about display strategies and provided invaluable input about the scope of the show. It was thrilling to witness their expertise expand and deepen over the course of the semester. In the end, they had freedom to select what to write about and how to approach their chosen subjects; the short essays that follow reflect their own research and theoretical interests. As with much of the art on view in the exhibition, **Mind Over Matter** reflects an experimental approach to cultural production, and foregrounds the political possibilities of collaboration.

Introduction

CONSTANCE M. LEWALLEN

Conceptual artists asserted that the idea behind an artwork is primary and its manifestation—be it a photograph, text, film, or video—secondary. The title of this exhibition, *Mind Over Matter,* refers to this central idea, famously expressed by Conceptual pioneer Lawrence Weiner, whose work since the late 1960s has consisted solely of words. In his 1968 "Declaration of Intent," which has since become a cornerstone of Conceptual art history, Weiner wrote:

1. The artist may construct the piece
2. The piece may be fabricated
3. The piece need not be built
Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist, the decision as to condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receivership.

This exhibition presents works from BAMPFA's considerable holdings of first-generation Conceptual art, broadly defined, which includes the archives of Tom Marioni's Museum of Conceptual Art, artists Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, and artist collective Ant Farm; the Stuart F. Pitesky Memorial Library of artists' books; extensive material on James Lee Byars and Lowell Darling; and a selection of works on paper, posters, mail art, artists' books, and other artists' ephemera by virtually all the major international Conceptualists, recently acquired from the Steven J. Leiber Trust. The exhibition features works related mid-twentieth-century avant-garde movement such as Happenings, Fluxus, and Earthworks, as well.

The artists represented in *Mind Over Matter* share an emphasis on concept and process and resistance to art as a commodity. Indeed, much of what they created was ephemeral—such as posters, flyers, announcements, pamphlets—or produced and disseminated free or at little cost. In recent years there has been an acknowledgment of the significance of such materials, largely through the foresight of Steven J. Leiber, who collected posters, ephemera, mail art, multiples, artists' books, and correspondence from the seminal years of Conceptualism (late 1960s to mid-1970s). In many cases the artists themselves designed these posters, mail art, and other ephemera and thought of them as extensions of their exhibition or project rather than temporary promotional materials. Leiber was among the first to recognize their value as art. Other items he collected for their art historical importance, for example the original poster announcement of Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 parts* that took place in 1959; this series of events launched one of the several proto-Conceptual movements that informed the generation of artists featured in *Mind Over Matter.*

The exhibition is conceived along two lines. A large selection of artists' posters initiates the section that focuses on language-based work while three of Bruce Nauman's seminal 1967–68 films introduce the works devoted to performance. The posters range from Lawrence Weiner's highly graphic *Learn to Read Art* and *As Far As the Mind Can See*, to Robert Morris's *Labyrinths-Voice-Blind Time* announcing his 1974 exhibition at the Castelli-Sonnabend Gallery in New York. Morris's poster consists of a photograph of the artist naked from the waist up in a hypermasculine pose replete with a Nazi-style helmet, spiked metal choker, chains, and dark glasses. It engendered a feminist rejoinder from Lynda Benglis who presented herself, also naked, in a November 1974 *Artforum* ad holding an enormous dildo. (Generally interpreted as a critique of a male-dominated art world, the Morris poster and response by Benglis are discussed in Carlos Mendez's essay that follows.)

Performance, unscripted actions, usually specific to a time and place, was a new genre in the 1960s. Nauman's filmed performances *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square (Square Dance), Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square*, and *Playing a Note on the Violin While I Walk Around the Studio* grew out of his realization that whatever he did in his studio was art, and his own body could be the instrument of it. Nauman's enacting simple, repetitive tasks in his studio before a 16mm camera with a minimum of props—actions he thought of as "dance problems without being a dancer"—shows the influence of avant-garde dance constructed around ordinary movement that was pioneered in the Bay Area by Anna Halprin. (Playwright Samuel Beckett's pared-down narrations and seemingly static dramas were another inspiration.) In a 1971 video Conceptual artist John Baldessari responds humorously to Nauman's contention that whatever an artist does is art: he strikes poses—extending arms, bending over, stretching—while repeating the phrase *I Am Making Art*.

Language-Based Work

Many Conceptualists made works based in language and linguistic systems. For Weiner, words alone can conjure up a place (*Above Below the Level of Water with a Probability of Flooding*), an observation (*How Much Is Enough*), or even a sly reference to his own work (*Learn to Read Art*). Carl Andre, renowned for his Minimalist sculpture, also created a body of poetry in which content and structure are one and the same. As with his sculpture, the grid forms the basis of his untitled lithograph (c. 1965) with each square containing a word, all arranged alphabetically.

Works by Stephen Kaltenbach and Jenny Holzer in *Mind Over Matter* consist exclusively of text. Each of Kaltenbach's bronze plaques of 1968 features a single word or phrase in raised letters: *Art Works, Fire, Water, Air, Flesh Blood*. The artist intended for them be embedded in cement in public space, where they would be noticed but not necessarily perceived as art. Like Kaltenbach, Holzer commandeered public space, affixing lists of statements without attribution that she titled *Truisms* to exterior walls already covered with ads or graffiti. Some read like proverbs, others clichés, still others admonitions that have since become iconic, such as ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE. (For a fuller analysis of Holzer's *Truisms* from 1977 to 1979, see Ellen Pong's essay.)

Hamish Fulton and Richard Long, two British artists associated with Earthworks, a movement which slightly predates the advent of Conceptualism, used words, either alone or in combination with maps and photographs, to describe their work. Like other Eartworks artists, they made art in the natural landscape; the work of Fulton and Long took the form of long walks. Fulton's 1988 poster in this exhibition evokes his walk on Baffin Island simply, with the words *Rock Fall Echo Dust* in bold red and black letters. Long represented a 1971–72 seven-day walk in Dartmoor, England, with several lines of text detailing his daily observations and experiences, a photograph, and a map. (This work is described fully in Emily Szasz's essay.)

Robert Smithson, a leading American Earthwork artist, relied on similar forms of documentation but also conceived what he termed non-sites—containers of natural materials gathered from a particular site—as a way to bring the experience of the land into the gallery. *Mono Lake Site. Mono Lake Nonsite* (1969) derived from a visit to Mono Lake in the Sierra Nevada foothills with artists Nancy Holt and Michael Heizer. Fascinated by this alkaline lake and the surrounding landscape, they made a film in which they demonstrate its unique features while Smithson gathers cinders from volcanic hills, later displayed in his exhibition at the Dwan Gallery in Los Angeles in early 1969. An altered map of the area, composed of repeated horizontal strips of map beginning at Mono Lake and ending in New York, serves as record of the event.

If Earth artists were the first to present documentary material to record ephemeral or remotely located works, Conceptual artists such as Douglas Huebler adopted the practice, and for similar reasons. Huebler, originally from the East Coast, was a highly influential professor at California Institute of the Arts near Los Angeles from 1976 to 1988. He began as a painter, then worked as a sculptor, but soon abandoned both in favor of a Conceptual practice expressed through documentation in the form of photography, maps, drawings, and descriptive language. In 1969 he explained: "The world is full of objects, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more. I prefer, simply, to state the existence of things in terms of time and place." This assertion, like Weiner's cited at the beginning of this essay, became one of

the main precepts of Conceptualism.

Characteristically, Huebler set forth a strategy, which, while seemingly logical, is in a practical sense absurd. For example, in his *Variable* series he attempted to photograph everyone in the world, following, it would seem, one of Sol LeWitt's foundational *Sentences on Conceptual Art*: "Irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically." For *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange* (1968) Huebler took sand and water from six sites on Cape Cod, mixed them with plaster to form a star-shaped object, and returned each "star" to its corresponding site, where it would eventually disappear. He documented his actions with a map, text, and photographs. For Huebler the art rested with the activity; the documentation is secondary information. (For a full analysis of this work, see Danielle Belanger's essay.)

Howard Fried's *The San Francisco Lesson and Text to Baby You Send Me* (1969) isn't documentation of an ephemeral work but rather an account of his interior musings. It features a map of California cut into sections and interspersed with a text in which Fried, the Sam Cooke song going around in his head, discusses his ambivalence about moving from the Bay Area to New York with two anthropomorphized interlocutors, Baby and the Lesson. During this period, Fried made many works in which he objectified his inner anxieties, specifically the psychological state of approach-avoidance, whereby the simultaneous attraction and repulsion of a goal results in indecision.

Other text-based works in the exhibition include Dan Graham's *Homes for America* (1971), which appeared between the covers of the December 1966 *Arts Magazine*. The two-page spread consists of photographs of monotonous suburban housing tracts and a text that draws parallels between identical row houses and the serial approach to art making practiced by Minimalist sculptors and musicians. This was not a document of an artwork but art as information.

Several artists in *Mind Over Matter* indulge in wordplay or test the limits of verbal communication. In a sequence of five photographs from 1970, Allen Ruppersberg, standing in front of a store window, obscures his face with ordinary objects (maps, a dictionary, a newspaper) and products (a cat food box, a gallon of gasoline), seemingly effacing his identity. Paul Kos, in collaboration with Marlene Kos, plays with language in *Riley Roily River* (1977). The two artists, with increasing volume, disagree on how to describe the raging river seen on screen. Marlene says "riley," Paul "roily," repeatedly as they devolve into a screaming match. Baldessari's *Blasted Allegories (Colorful Sentences: Announce)* (1978) exemplifies the many works in which he deals with the relationship between words and images. (For more on Kos and Baldessari, see Tobias Rosen's and Haili Wang's essays, respectively.)

The malleability of language has always been a major component of Nauman's work. His lithograph *Sugar /Ragus* (1973) is an example of a work in which he inverts words to

suggest new meanings or, as in this example, a nonsense phrase. This particular word combination derives from Nauman's recollection of a call-and-response football cheer in which the cheerleader yelled "give me an 'R'" and so on until the crowd spelled out "ragus." Then, the cheerleader asked what "ragus" spells backward and the crowd answered, "sugar."

Language is fundamental to the work of Theresa Hak-Kyung Cha. Born in Korea in 1951, Cha immigrated to the Bay Area with her family when she was twelve. Although she became completely fluent in English and in French, Cha clung to her native tongue, not wanting to lose what for Koreans is especially precious—the ability to speak and write in their own language— because it was prohibited under the decades-long Japanese occupation. In her 1975 video *Mouth to Mouth* Cha silently forms the Korean vowels, the very building blocks of the language. (See Byung Kwon Kim's essay for a discussion of this work.)

Mail art—a method by which artists communicate directly with an individual—is the most democratic of genres. It developed out of the Fluxus movement of the 1950s and 1960s and was adopted by Conceptual artists such as Gilbert & George, British artists who have worked as a duo since they met in art school in the late 1960s. In 1975 they mailed to friends on a weekly basis eight red and four black folded-over greeting cards (the artists called them "postal sculptures"). Collectively titled *Red Boxers*, each card bears a drawing in gold ink that depicts the artists in various poses accompanied by a single word, such as "wooden," that has an enigmatic relationship to the adjacent image and is repeated in a poetic phrase in the interior of the card: "In the room we looked across / The Wooden Air between." Other examples of mail art by Ray Johnson, who established the New York School of Correspondance [*sic*] in the early 1960s; Lowell Darling; Jan Dibbets; Ant Farm, and others, are also on view. Despite the dominance of electronic communication, there is still a lively international mail art scene.

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Performance

Performance was widely practiced by Conceptual artists, especially by women, who didn't have to contend with a male-dominated history when working in this new genre. Cha is represented in the performance section of *Mind Over Matter* with a series of photographs documenting *Aveugle Voix*, which she performed in 1975 while she was a graduate student at UC Berkeley. Dressed in white, Cha covered her eyes with a white cotton band with the stenciled French word "voix" (voice) and her mouth with another strip with the word "aveugle" (blind), thus reversing the expected relationship between word and image. The nine black-and-white photographs on view in the exhibition are the only account of Cha's performance and were apparently made for her own records rather than for exhibition.

Carolee Schneeman articulated her experiences as a female artist working in a sexist environment in her notorious 1975 performance *Interior Scroll*. Standing naked on a table, she read from a long scroll as she extracted it from her vagina. Institutional acceptance of performance is a recent phenomenon, and many live performances took place in alternative or other noncommercial spaces, before a camera in the artist's studio, or in the street, as did many enacted and/or directed by James Lee Byars, including *Dress for 500* (1968) and *The Wand* (1975).

Photographic documentation, imperfect as it is, is one of the primary ways we experience live performance after the fact. Scott Burton's *Individual Performance Tableaux*, presented in 1979 as part of the BAMPFA MATRIX Program, and documented through photographs, brought together two aspects of Burton's work, furniture design and performance, in a series of live tableaux vivants featuring an unclothed male performer assuming poses in relationship to a minimalist chaise. Burton thought of these actions as living sculptures. Burton directed performers rather than, as was more common, performing on his own.

The early performances by European artists Marina Abramović and Ulay who worked together from 1976 to 1988, investigated male-female relationships and at times involved violent contact. The series of photographs titled *Relation in Space* documents their first performance, which took place at the 1976 Venice Biennale. Over the course of an hour the two unclad artists, who began on opposite sides of the room, repeatedly walked past and touched each other, at times violently. Abramović described it as "two bodies running for one hour to each other, like two planets, and mixing male and female energy together into a third component we called 'that self.'"

Similarly, Jim Melchert's untitled film loop from 1973 involves a naked man and woman interacting, but here their contact consists of playfully throwing buckets of water at each other in ultra slow motion against the sound of the ocean. Unlike Burton's, Melchert's actors performed for the camera rather than for a live audience. The artist says that, at the time, he was thinking about Eadweard Muybridge's motion studies. He explains further that in his work he "had friends and family members doing things for me. As for the medium, the entire venture stemmed from how we all used slides in those days to remember our trips and family visits."

Melchert, who started as a ceramic sculptor and for many years was a professor in the Department of Art Practice at UC Berkeley, made a radical change in his own work when he began to experiment with slide pieces and performance. He introduced these new genres to his students Theresa Hak Kyung Cha and Stephen Laub. Laub's *Relations* is based on his 1973 six-hour performance as part of *All Night Sculpture*, a series of performances curated by Tom Marioni at his Museum of Conceptual Art (MOCA) in San Francisco. In the live version, Laub projected life-size images from his family photo albums, which were about all the family was able to salvage before fleeing Germany for the United States on the eve of World War II. Dressed in white, the artist took up to fifteen minutes to align himself with one of the figures depicted—a parent, grandparent, or other relative—until he merged with the projection. Laub so closely identified with his subject physically and psychically that at times he found he got lost in the image. "At a certain point the identification becomes so close that it gets confusing," he admitted. Laub has created an excerpted version of the documentation of that live performance for *Mind Over Matter*. (Gabriel Carr discusses Laub's work in his essay.)

Lynn Hershman Leeson, Eleanor Antin, and Martha Rosler also addressed identity issues, as did many women who were entering the art world in greater numbers in the 1970s on the wave of feminism. In her multiyear performance *Roberta Breitmore* (1974–78) Hershman Leeson assumed a fictional alter ego and tells her story in several mediums—performance, photographs, video, and works on paper. Hershman Leeson inhabited the life of Roberta, a downtrodden single woman trying to survive a childhood of abuse. Roberta had her own wardrobe, bank account, driver's license, and credit cards. Like

Laub, Hershman Leeson fully embodied her fake persona to the extent that when dressed and acting as Roberta she often went unrecognized by friends. (See Ryan Serpa's essay for more about *Roberta Breitmore*.)

Antin also engaged in role playing, casting herself in various roles: ballet dancer, nurse, and filmmaker. In *Representational Painting* (1971) she both parodies the practice of painting and comments on women's efforts at physical enhancement as she transforms her appearance through the careful application of makeup before a video camera. In Rosler's three-part mail art project *A budding gourmet, McTowers Maid,* and *Tijuana* (1974–75)—a serialized novel mailed as a postcard set—the artist locates food, central in women's lives be they housewives or maids, as symbolic of cultural repression.

For female artists the body became the vehicle through which to explore their identities and roles in society, while for many male artists, such as Nauman, the body was not so much about identity as it was a new material to be explored. Many of Chris Burden's early performances were tests of his physical endurance. In 1971, before a live audience, he famously had himself shot in the arm with a .22 rifle. This shocking event had political overtones, occurring as it did not long after the Ohio National Guard gunned down students during an antiwar protest at Kent State University. Terry Fox's 1970 performance *Defoliation* was a powerful indictment of the US military's use of Agent Orange to destroy vegetation in Vietnam. At the opening of an exhibition at the temporary quarters of the University Art Museum (later BAMPFA) on the UC Berkeley campus, Fox surprised the audience by incinerating a bed of flowers planted outside the gallery.

Much of the performance activity by Fox, Kos, Fried, Laub, Linda Montano, Bonnie Sherk, David Ireland, and other Bay Area Conceptual artists took place at MOCA, Marioni's Conceptual art museum, founded in San Francisco in 1970. In 1972, Marioni began performing a series of action drawings in various American and European locations that can be understood as a single, extended work that continues to today. *Liberating Light and Sound* took place in Bologna, Italy, in 1979. In the photographic documentation of the event, one sees the artist from the back drumming on a white marble slab with steel wire brushes so that eventually the surface became polished like a sharpening stone. A yellow light illuminates the setting. For Marioni, these performances, or actions, as he preferred to call them, were poetic events and although enacted in public, had a personal, transformative effect.

In contrast, the collective Ant Farm (Chip Lord, Doug Michels, and Curtis Schreier) designed and enacted spectacular events to be experienced by a large public. *Media Burn* highlights their 1975 Bicentennial event, which culminated in the collision of two American cultural symbols: a customized Cadillac crashing into a pyramid of burning television sets. With *Media Burn*, Ant Farm cleverly critiqued and attracted the mass media: all the local media outlets covered the "antic" event in their news reports that evening. The documentaton of this event has become a classic of early video art.

Considered a forerunner of Conceptual art, and inspired by Dada artists (especially Marcel Duchamp) and composer John Cage, Fluxus was a loose group of visual artists, poets, musicians, and designers. At one time or another Fluxus activities involved many of the leading avant-garde artists of the time, such as Nam June Paik, Yoko Ono, Joseph Beuys, Wolf

Vostell, Shigeko Kubota, and Cage himself. Working across media and decidedly anticommercial and anti–high art, Fluxus artists sought to merge art and life. They staged a series of events or "fluxfests," raucous affairs in which participants followed a loose score involving unconventional instruments and noisemakers. Fluxus artists pioneered "performance by recipient," in which an artist provides instructions or "scores" for viewers to follow on their own. For example, *Grapefruit*, a small book of drawings and instructions by Ono first issued in 1964, includes these two entries: *City Piece: walk all over the city with an empty baby carriage* and the Zen-like *Stone Piece: Take the sound of the stone aging*. (See Samantha Agoncillo's essay on Ono that follows.)

Several "fluxkits," small containers usually produced in multiple and sometimes including scores to be followed, are included in *Mind Over Matter*: Jock Reynolds's *Great Race Fluxsport* (c. 1969) contains snail shells; James Riddles's *E.S.P. Fluxkit* (c. 1966) provides a test of one's psychic abilities; Ben Vautier's *A Flux Suicide Kit* (1967) contains suicide aids; Robert Watts's *Flux Timekit* (c. 1967) includes objects such as a watch face, balloon, battery, dice, and a screw. George Brecht and Robert Filliou's *Eastern Daylight Flux Time* (c. 1967–77) is a pocket watch casing containing a feather, watch face, nail, small shell, beads, and other objects. (This work is discussed by Taylor Osman in her essay). Many of the Fluxus materials came to BAMPFA as gifts from Alice Hutchins, who often participated in Fluxus events. (Danielle Caro discusses Hutchins's 1966 altered postcard *Homage to Ingres (La Baigneuse)* in her essay.)

What might have seemed like an era of end games unexpectedly proved to be one of the most fertile periods in contemporary art. The work of many of today's artists builds on the innovations of their predecessors included in this exhibition who invented new modes of artistic production: performance, site-specific installation, film, video, mail art, artists' books, photographic and text-based documentation. That their work resonates with today's young artists, historians, and art enthusiasts is, I believe, because it marks the last moment when art existed primarily as an exchange of ideas among artists and adherents of these new forms. And, although most the artists did not address political or social issues directly in their work, their constant experimentation and rejection of traditional modes of artmaking and exhibiting that seemed remote and wholly inadequate to the era continues to inspire.

Robert Morris: Sensationalizing Masculinity in the *Labyrinths-Voice-Blind Time* Poster

CARLOS MENDEZ

Robert Morris (b. 1931) is a pivotal figure whose work moved between Minimal sculpture and Conceptual art. In April 1974, the Castelli-Sonnabend Gallery in New York presented Morris with a solo show entitled *Labyrinths-Voice-Blind Time*, and commissioned the artist to create a poster advertising the exhibit. The resultant specially posed photograph of the artist has become an iconic depiction of flamboyant artistic promotion, as well as understood by various critics and authors as a contested embodiment of masculinity, queerness, authority, and labor.

The advertisement depicts Morris shirtless and lathered up in oil, with a robust layering of chains around his neck and a solid metal choker with spikes radiating from the collar. In addition to these accoutrements, Morris sports a pair of dark aviator sunglasses and a military hard hat; according to cultural critic Susan Sontag's seminal essay "Fascinating Fascism," it resembles a Nazi helmet.[1] Sontag declares, "Photographs of uniforms"—particularly photographs of SS uniforms—"are erotic material." The SS was meant to be "not only supremely violent but also supremely beautiful." The SS uniform was "tight, heavy, stiff" and decorated with symbols and badges to distinguish ranks, because "for fantasy to have depth, it must have detail."

Morris's play with masculinity and power is evident in more than just the helmet. A harsh ray of light streams in from the far right side of the photograph, highlighting Morris's flexed bicep, pumped-up musculature, and scruffy facial hair. According to art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson, the hard hat in 1970 was associated with "working class masculinity," and she describes the hard hat as an emblem of blue-collar culture and patriotic politics during the U.S. war in Vietnam.[2] According to Bryan-Wilson, the photograph of the artist becomes an embodiment of hypermasculinity, but is so exaggerated it becomes campy and parodic.

It is important to note that Morris was not alone in this sort of engagement with outlandish promotional images. Morris's poster—as a kind of campy publicity—can be understood in a broader context in which artists were vying for attention in an increasingly image-conscious art market. For instance, in 1970 feminist artist Judy Chicago announced her name change from Judy Gerowitz, and her exhibit at Jack Glenn Gallery, by running an ad in which she was dressed like a boxer; several years later, Lynda Benglis responded to Morris with her famous dildo *Artforum* ad. Similar to Morris's ad Benglis appears nude, oiled up in sun tan lotion, sporting sunglasses, and swinging a large double-sided dildo. According to Richard Meyer, Benglis described her ad as the "ultimate mockery of the pinup and the macho."[3]

The ads produced by Chicago, Benglis, and Morris offer a humorous parody of masculinity and authority. The absurd play of gender roles further contributes to the sensationalism surrounding the compositions. Chicago crossdressing and Benglis's parody of maleness or masculinity explore undertones of queerness. Morris's choreographed iconic representation, itself a mockery of hypermasculinity, further explores elements of homoeroticism. This is particularly true of his outfit. Sontag describes Nazi-type "boots, leather, chains, Iron Crosses on gleaming torsos, swastikas, along with meat hooks and heavy motorcycles" as sexual and erotic paraphernalia in which the fascist aesthetics of brute force become fetishized.[4] These elements and accessories are also staples of BDSM communities (BDSM refers to bondage, discipline, submission, and masochism). His reference to BDSM practices queers the photograph of Morris, and indeed the poster can be found in gay bars, somewhat outside the usual gallery/museum circuit; in 2009, a gay sex club in Berlin displayed the poster during a film screening as a way to point out the perverse masculinity in much of Minimalism.[5]

Morris makes use of standard BDSM accoutrements to offer an institutional critique of male authority in the art world—the absurd choreographed representation he embodies provides a glimpse of the patriarchal power structure enacted in art institutions. Similarly, Meyer describes Benglis's ad as not documenting a "performance so much as it enacts one, a performance of pornography that doubles as a brazen commentary on the marketing of contemporary art and the public exposure of the artist."[6] Thus, at the same time as such outlandish works of the 1970s offered a critique, they served as promotional propaganda for the artist.

If the level of authority Morris possesses in the poster is undermined by his ridiculous outfit, this only serves, ultimately, to generate controversy and hence increase publicity. Morris asserts the artist as a theatrically, ironically heroic authoritarian figure, yet the image of him in vision-obscuring dark sunglasses does not suggest a person ready to commence making art. By 1974, Morris had achieved a sufficient level of fame and respect that he was able to risk producing such an outrageous public image; the poster is thus a testament to his mobility and power in the art world he critiques.

Morris's advertisement for his Castelli-Sonnabend show demonstrates the careful way in which the visual components of publicity and their possible shock value were orchestrated. Morris utilizes homoeroticism and BDSM paraphernalia as evidence of marginalized, extreme sex practices, but by doing so, he reasserts his own inviolable straightness. Perhaps the
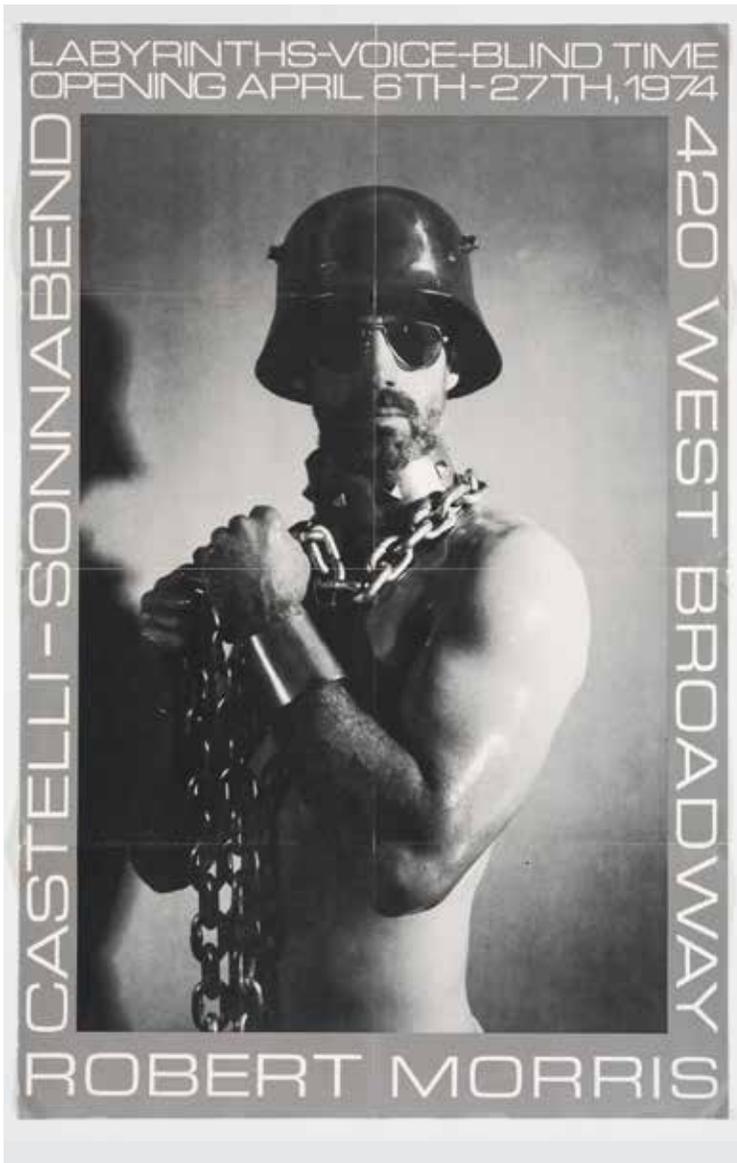
poster makes sense given Morris's interest in shifting subject positions and performance, especially as, to cite Sontag, BDSM participants are "expert costumers and choreographers as well as performers, in a drama that is all the more exciting because it is forbidden to ordinary people."[7]

Morris's poster has become notorious for its flirtation with this taboo material, as well as for its presumed disconnect between what it was advertising—the identity of the artist—and what was on view in the exhibit. The body of work presented at Morris's Castelli-Sonnabend show consisted of Minimalist sculpture and Conceptual pieces. The exhibit included Morris's sculpture *Labyrinth,* his *Blind Time* drawings, two monumental wall felt sculptures, an untitled sculpture (ring with light), and *Voice.* The poster for *Labyrinths-Voice-Blind Time* projects conflicting ideas of masculinity, queerness, and authority. Most importantly, it functions as a form of publicity in which the artwork itself becomes less important than the carefully choreographed persona of the artist.

Stretching the Truth: Understanding Jenny Holzer's *Truisms*

ELLEN PONG

Through her *Truism* series—a long-term project begun in 1977 and continuing throughout her career—artist Jenny Holzer (b. 1950) explores the uncertainties of what we think we know to be true about common-sense platitudes, as well as what we take for granted about such so-called truths. The early *Truisms* are pages of text—statements such as "MONEY CREATES TASTE"—that were anonymously wheat-pasted in public spaces in New York. With this series Holzer emerged as a forerunner of second-generation Conceptual artists who gained momentum in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the United States. Like that of the 1960s Conceptualists before her, much of her work hinges on the deliberate circumvention of traditional art institutions in favor of more democratic and accessible spaces. Additionally, Holzer continues Conceptual art's lineage of prioritizing ideas over materials, taking this concept to the literal extreme by adopting elements of street art and text-based graffiti in defiance of commodification. Largely concerned with the dissemination of information as it is facilitated by preexisting public communication systems, Holzer's work focuses on interweaving messages throughout the fabric of the urban space it occupies, making use of posters, signs, LED boards, and theater marquees, to engage in critical dialogue with the narrative of the city.

A turning point in her journey towards engaging with the art of rhetoric was Holzer's experience in the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum, where she was inspired to summarize and concretize ideas drawn from the readings in critical theory that she encountered there.[1] *Truisms* first took form as text posters, which Holzer, at the age of twenty-seven, put up around Manhattan from 1977 to 1979. Capitalized, bolded, black, sans serif text is formed into one-line "truisms," organized alphabetically. Some sound familiar: "A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE CAN GO A LONG WAY"; some do not: "KILLING IS UNAVOIDABLE BUT NOTHING TO BE PROUD OF." Some have become familiar because their creation and propagation by Holzer has made them widespread: "ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE." These posters, featured on walls, fences, storefronts, and other eye-level surfaces, were small gestures within the text-polluted cityscape of New York, and yet it was this very context of advertising-soaked urbanism that gave her posters their charge.

Holzer's *Truisms* are not defined by the authority of the art institution, but rather are integrated onto the surfaces of everyday life. As an artist, Holzer continues the Conceptualist critique of the art museum or gallery by offering work that exists outside of these spaces; *Truisms* exist in public space. The artist uses wheat-pasted posters to mimic the language

and form of advertisements in the city, occupying the same field of vision as commercial propaganda to disrupt the hegemony of the messages that otherwise define the space. While advertisements mean to sell goods or services to the public, or raise awareness of a brand or company, Holzer's *Truisms* hold no such mercantile agenda. Instead, they are anonymously distributed, serving no overt purpose other than to exist in the streets. The apparent purposelessness of the *Truisms*, and their many internal contradictions, attempts to reclaim public space, presenting it as a site for interaction, debate, and collective conversation rather than a space dominated by private corporations and capitalist pursuits.

Truisms was conceived in relation to the proliferation of wheat-pasted poster art in the 1960s and early 1970s.[2] Rooted in a history of political activism and youth culture, the street art movement borrowed formally from sign painting and commercial marketing techniques to subvert the types of messages being projected by such sources. Some of this work is considered vandalism, and is subject to various laws against defacing property. In order to practice such street art, artists must develop techniques of installation that put their bodies at risk. Holzer's *Truisms* can also thus be read as a kind of secret act of performance art, with the performance taking place only in the viewer's imagination as the posters seem to appear from nowhere overnight, with no evident signature or date to ground them in time or space. Floating free of apparent authorship, and unclear to their original audiences as to their exact intent, Holzer's texts blur the boundaries of high art and street art. They also disrupt the binaries of art world versus general public, and, ultimately, unravel the distinction between what is truthful and what is untruthful. The series thus offers the experience of reading between the lines of the city. Holzer's vexing mixed messages ask whether or not the proliferation of information that confronts us in our daily environment creates an informed audience, or rather one desensitized to messages in public space.

Using strategically generic formatting and design, Holzer generates an aura of both authority and neutrality in the *Truisms.* The posters themselves took different variations within the two-year time span of their original production. The earliest ones, from 1977, used a bolded Helvetica text, while posters from 1979 employed italicized, bolded Times New Roman text. Both of these typefaces carry rich histories of usage and are seen as industrial staples in the field of design, valued for their legibility, their ubiquity, and their trusted reputations. Times New Roman was developed in 1931 by the London newspaper *The Times* in order to maximize legibility

and economize space.[3] It has since become one of the most familiar serif fonts in the world.

Helvetica, which was designed in 1957, holds a similarly reputable status, widely used as the standard sans serif font. Helvetica was originally created in Switzerland during the post-World War II era of Modernism, a movement prioritizing functionality and underpinned by the idea that designers hold a social responsibility to facilitate the construction of a smoothly operating modern society.[4] Founded to create a rational, neutral, and versatile typeface, by the mid-1960s Helvetica became a marker of sleek corporate identity. Although it is subtle, the original intentions shaping the creation of these two typefaces inevitably intertwine with our reading of Holzer's use of them. As Marshall McLuhan famously stated, "the medium is the message";[5] with the *Truisms* it is clear that the fonts Holzer utilized help convey their meaning. The apparent "neutrality" and standardization of both typefaces is key to Holzer's play with ideas of authority, as the fonts' very blandness gives the statements, some of which are violent, extreme, fascistic, absurd, or humorous, the gloss of the ordinary. By appropriating typefaces standardized by corporations and government organizations, and also placing the work within environments dominated by commercial material, Holzer asks: Who owns the truth? Who gets to fabricate what we consider "common knowledge"? She thus intervenes in everyday discourse as she teases apart intersecting, or completely contradictory, beliefs.

The early *Truisms* series is a work activated by its environment. One tactic of 1960s Conceptualism was to implement a critique of the art institution from within the institution itself; Holzer employs a similar strategy by critiquing the politics of the public sphere within public space. In each poster, Holzer gives voice to a plurality of voices—they are cacophonous, organized only by the arbitrary alphabet. Each line characterizes a different belief, and many represent opposing viewpoints, such as "RAISE BOYS AND GIRLS THE SAME WAY" and "SEX DIFFERENCES ARE HERE TO STAY." But the uniform fonts and the list format synthesizes these inconsistencies, so that the viewer must struggle to figure out what is being endorsed, and which truth to believe. In public streets, a space where a multitude of words and ideas attempt to grab our attention, we tend to recognize only those messages that feel relevant to us, filtering out the rest as clutter. With these clashing voices on one page, Holzer asks us to determine what our views are. Some lines may resonate more or less with the potential viewer. Presented in a seemingly objective tone, with a seemingly objective format, the more inflammatory statements have driven some to physically interact with the texts, writing their own thoughts and opinions on the posters. These handwritten addenda or strike-throughs contribute to a sense that Holzer has created an urgent and open-ended conversation that invites participation.[6]

**MONEY
CREATES
TASTE**

**MOTHERS SHOULD NOT
MAKE TOO MANY
SACRIFICES**
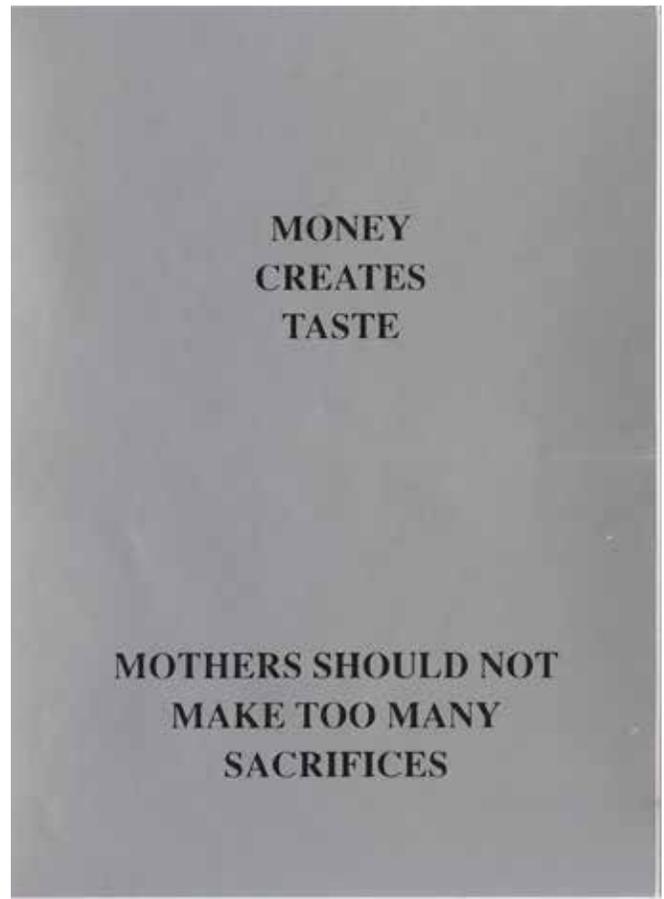
By presenting these conflicting voices one after the other, with no commentary or explanation, Holzer forces us to recognize that the definition of truth is nuanced and ever shifting. No matter how determinedly we impose our beliefs on others by framing them as truths, all beliefs are truths to someone. The *Truisms* remind us to be critical of what truisms we abide by and take for granted in our passive acceptance of them as ultimate truths. In this, Holzer is related to early, Conceptual, text-based art by a figure like Joseph Kosuth, as he, too, probed the ideological nature of language and shifting sign-systems, arguing that "[art] involves not only the assertion of meaning but also its cancellation."[7] Yet as Holzer moved out of the gallery, she confronted how words are shaped by power, gender, and money. And her ephemeral installations, subjected to unpredictable activity in the streets, thus became a significant force in New York, and within Conceptual art.

Richard Long's *A Hundred Mile Walk*

EMILY SZASZ

The year is 1971, and a British artist named Richard Long is going for a walk. The ecological movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which was sparked in part by the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, is continuing to gain momentum, and earthworks are becoming important in the art world as artists such as Michael Heizer, Peter Hutchinson, and Robert Smithson begin to make works staged in the environment, particularly in remote areas far from urban sprawl. Simultaneously, commodity culture and consumerism are rapidly growing, both on a global scale and within the art world. It is as a reaction to these trends that Long (b. 1945) embarks on his hundred-mile walk on Dartmoor, which is touted as a rugged, natural, and largely undeveloped countryside in South West England.[1]

Unlike the assertive works of artists like Heizer and Smithson, who attempted to change the landscape with large-scale construction projects in which tons of earth were moved, Long adopts an intentionally gentle approach, choosing instead to make a subtle path by walking on the ground and later recording his experiences through photographs, maps, and text descriptions. As is outlined in the documentation of this work, Long walked a circular course over seven days to create *A Hundred Mile Walk*. The circular shape of his path mirrors the cyclical nature of the meditative thoughts that he records as part of the ephemera attached to the work, which are brief yet descriptive and evocative, marked by day to form a kind of poem that also guides the viewer through the process of Long's walk. By reading and observing the documentation associated with *A Hundred Mile Walk*, the viewer is invited into Long's personal world, allowed to join him in his contemplative state and to connect with both the artist and the walk itself. This is a somewhat paradoxical invitation, given that Long does not perform his walks in front of an audience and hence purposefully excludes viewers from experiencing the walks firsthand. Pastoral and personal, Long's walks seem to draw us into the world he creates even as we are also held at arm's length, distanced from the effects the artist himself describes.

Drawing on a long English tradition of responding to nature in a contemplative way—which dates back to Romantic poets such as William Wordsworth and artists like John Constable—Long chooses to document his experience and mental state during the walk through text, image, and map.[2] In staging the work using conceptual methods, Long communicates both a reverence for nature and an interest in how humans and land interact.

Keen to describe a poetic, contemplative space of his seven-day journey, he generates one short, evocative phrase for each day:

Day 1: Winter skyline, a north wind
Day 2: The Earth turns effortlessly under my feet
Day 3: Suck icicles from the grass stems
Day 4: As though I had never been born
Day 5: In and out the sound of rivers over familiar stepping stones
Day 6: Corrina, Corrina
Day 7: Flop down on my back with tiredness
    Stare up at the sky and watch it recede

These statements focus on the sensory experience of Long's walk, implicitly asking viewers to imagine his sensations as if they were their own. We can imagine we feel the icy north wind on our faces, or picture our feet on the ever-turning earth below us; Long invites us to taste the icicles and hear the river as it skips over stones. Statements that reflect Long's solitary experience are meant to offer a multisensory glimpse into his private world.

We even hear the song playing in Long's head on day 6—"Corrina, Corrina," a folk song Bob Dylan released on his 1963 album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan.* The song may have inspired Long because of its natural imagery. Its lyrics reference a bird: "I got a bird that whistles / I got a bird that sings" but go on to speak about a relationship, lamenting, "But I ain't a-got Corrina / Life don't mean a thing."[3] A wink and a nudge by Long, perhaps, acknowledging that the pastoral world he claims to inhabit is not as all-consuming as the viewer might otherwise think.

Along with the seven statements, the documentation of *A Hundred Mile Walk* includes a photograph of the landscape as Long might have seen it on the walk. The photograph is black and white, emphasizing the work's meditative state and harking back to an earlier time, much as Long links back to Romanticism with his poetic reflections. The photograph looks out onto the craggy hills of Dartmoor, but is taken from below the hilltops, emphasizing the size and grandeur of the landscape. There is a valley between two rugged hills, and in this valley we see a kind of path, which looks to be, or at least reminds the viewer of, the path that Long has made by walking in carrying out his work. The viewer is humbled by the looming landscape, and impressed by the undertaking of Long's walking journey, which with this photograph comes alive from its flat, precise documentation in the map, the final component of his documentation.

The map itself seems to be store bought; it is printed in black and white, includes a key to show distance, and appears to be standardized in every detail, from typography to topography.

Long has added only one small but crucial detail: a perfect circle, drawn with a steady hand in ink. This circle marks the route of his walk. Art historian Peter Wollen has discussed how mapping served a unique purpose in Conceptual art, as it allowed for new methods of sharing a performance-based work. "From an ensemble of verbal, photographic and cartographic data," he writes, viewers "conceptually reconstruct the actual performance—which involved a programmatic journey in the real world 'outside of my studio' . . . rather than a traditional studio-bound way of making art."[4] The inclusion of a map in this work, then, builds on the connections that Long creates between himself and his work and the viewer, while serving as a form of "proof" to authenticate his walk.

The careful geometry of Long's route, visible from the circle he has drawn on the map, points to the inscription of precise, mathematical systems by humans upon the unruly natural world.[5] Yet Long also emphasizes the smallness of his intervention onto the landscape, asserting in his walks not man's power over nature but rather a critique of such aggressions. His entire walking project can also be seen as a kind of institutional critique, as it is an act of escaping from the museum and gallery space and even his own studio.

Long cultivates his pastoral persona carefully. The viewer is made to feel that his contemplative mood and connection to nature are as much a part of him as they are part of the work, which allows the viewer to connect directly with Long's experience of the work through its intimate documentation. William Wood writes about how intentionally Long creates this thoughtful atmosphere around his walks, discussing how his work is a performance of "a quiet connection, private, a philosophical dialogue between the artist and the earth."[6] Long becomes so inextricable from his work that they are thought to share the same character, but this too is an artistic device. The orchestration of a "philosophical dialogue between the artist and the earth" is as much part of the dissemination of Long's work as it is part of the myth surrounding his personality.
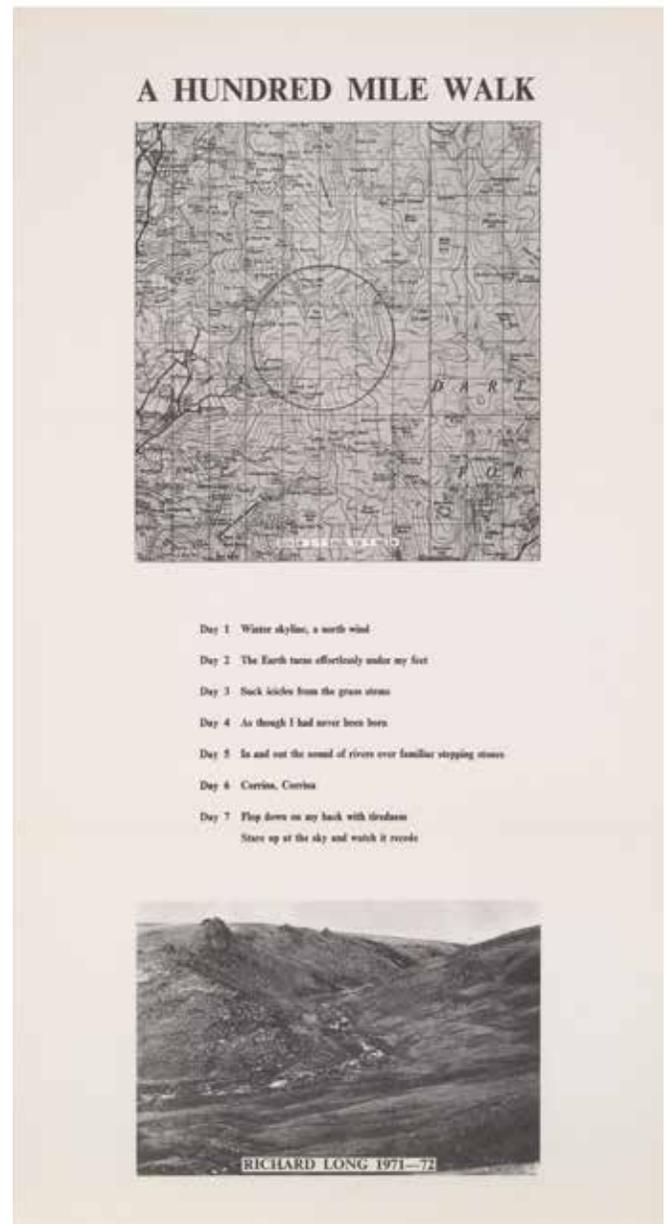
Richard Long: *A Hundred Mile Walk*, 1972; exhibition poster, Galleria Sperone, Turin, Italy; offset printing on paper; 20¾ × 11 in.; BAMPFA, purchase made possible through a bequest from Phoebe Apperson Hearst, by exchange, a partial gift of the Steven Leiber Trust, and gifts from Andy and Deborah Rappaport, Robin Wright, Frances Bowes, Alexandra Bowes, and proceeds from the Marcia Simon Weisman Foundation Fund and the Friends and Trustees Acquisitions Endowment Fund.

Conceiving Space, Creating Place

DANIELLE BELANGER

By way of map, photograph, and land, Douglas Huebler's cunning wit is in ample evidence in his piece *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange*, from 1968. Working outside of institutional frameworks, Huebler (1924–1997) critiqued the cultural confinements of the art world by exaggerating and complicating the systems and boundaries that shape it. In this work he used Conceptual models and documentation to redefine sculpture, capitalizing on the absurd and bringing questions of site-specificity to the fore.

Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange consists of three parts: The first includes a hand-drawn map marking six locations that form the shape of a star. The second part is composed of sand and water taken from each of the six sites, mixed together with plaster, then cast into a "star" sculpture analogous in shape and size to the star shape drawn on the map. Once all six sculptures were completed, Huebler returned each to its original location, leaving the stars near the water's edge. The final component of the work contains six black-and-white photographs that Huebler took, documenting the act of returning the sculptures to their primary sites.

Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange includes a great deal of expository information, yet it does not readily lend itself to interpretation. That said, viewers are presented with a hint that helps decode the cryptic charts and photographs in the piece, found directly on the map of Cape Cod in the form of a reimagined cartographic key fashioned to resemble a map legend. In this five-part explanation of *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange*, however, there is no elaboration of the purpose, outcome, or deeper meaning behind the work. Instead—and in a deadpan manner—Huebler describes the somewhat absurd steps he took to create the work of art. Items one through four are relatively straightforward, informing viewers of the angles and degrees of the chosen sites, as well as the sculptural process. Item five, on the other hand, diverges from the mundane nature of formal expository listing; Huebler writes, "AND THEN A STAR WAS RETURNED TO EACH LOCATION WHERE EACH WAS PLACED NEXT TO THE WATER'S EDGE—AND LEFT THERE, FOR GOOD."

The finality of this last step is exaggerated not only by the melodramatic pause and the overall tone of the description, but also by the corresponding black-and-white photographs that document the act. In each of the six photographs, there are only two present subjects: the physical location—which is a desolate beach—and the isolated, seemingly rejected, star-shaped sculpture. Huebler superimposes the romantic and fantastical tropes of a coastal shoreline mise-en-scene with the devastating terms of abandonment. Using theatrics and

humor, he drives his point home: the piece is a metaphor for the abandonment of the art object so commonly touted within dematerialized Conceptual art

Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange is rife with such romanticism and strangeness, exaggerated to the point of being nonsensical. It is both aesthetically appealing and acute to the Conceptual movement while remaining technologically (and cartographically) exact. The work draws from melodramatic film and literary tropes of romance and abandonment, Conceptual ideologies concerning dematerialization, and the social-political context of its moment. Foremost, however, *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange* raises questions regarding the systems of mapping and the function of maps.

Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Exchange brings to mind the short story "On Exactitude in Science" (1946), by Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. In the imagined empire of the story, the science of cartography becomes so precise that only a map the size of the city itself will suffice. Huebler's work is layered with a similar sense of absurdity. Yet he was not only concerned with the formalisms of science and cartography; he was also interested in the "iconic code and the verbal and temporal codes involved in making and understanding maps."[1] Huebler interrogated conceptual leaps of nonrational behavior and explored cognitive processes to de-rationalize the systematic logic of maps and documentation. The agency and imagination of the artist's hand meets empirical reason, where the prevailing (though ultimately unwarranted) understanding of art and science as being two entirely separate domains is challenged.

Huebler pushes the limits of scientific precision and the language of specificity—notions of order, reason, and regulation are implicit in *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange*—yet there is no perceivable functionality or rationale behind the mappings themselves. The act of documenting is not only a means of recording spatial and temporal environments, but also an occasion to recognize the impermanence of artworks themselves.

Like the very function of a map itself, *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Exchange* provides viewers with the capacity for navigation. Yet, rather than our navigating through a spatial environment, Huebler invites viewers to navigate through a theoretical one—made up of memory, reflection, and longing. His work resonates with Yoko Ono's 1962 *Map Piece*, in which Ono asks viewers to "Draw an imaginary map."[2] As if the two artists were in dialogue, Huebler not only draws an imaginary map but creates an imaginary system of mapping.

Through the faculties of memory and imagination, Huebler's work possesses a lyrical quality—one that encourages the exploration of unfamiliar terrains. *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange* inserts a sense of strangeness into the rational realm of documentation and diagram by wielding tensions between the empirical and the imaginary.

Working within and deliberately outside of the scientific system of mapping, Huebler contradicts the prototypical map—a computer-generated, machine-made product, whose technological precision allows for objective interpretation. Although the artist could have carried out the project with a store-bought map, he vigilantly hand-drew one, carefully charting out each site. In addition, though the star sculptures are physical markers of the sites, they are movable, and unconstrained; the markers are at risk of deterioration, or disappearing altogether. Huebler created a map that lacked an obvious function, thwarting the primary purpose of maps to clarify orientational spaces and direct a route, whether that be for migration, travel, or strategies and tactics of war. As a result, Huebler turned the system of mapping against itself, and he did so at a time that could not have proved more fitting.

Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange was created in 1968—the year one of the largest military campaigns of the Vietnam War, known as the Tet Offensive, was launched, in January. As a Marine during World War II, Huebler was prompted to reflect on his military experience during the profound and bitter conflicts that played out in the U.S. during the Vietnam War in the 1960s. When asked about his use of maps in his work, Huebler recalled the prevalence of maps and their specific uses from his experiences in the military. He states that he "accompanied pilots on observation flights in order to determine if targeted anti-aircraft gun

positions had been either destroyed, or moved, as was often the situation." Huebler continues:

> Whatever new information we brought back was displayed on our large map with colored push pins, and that information played an important role in the intelligence briefings delivered before each strike.[3]

Despite the impetus of the peace movement by 1968, the unpopular war in Vietnam gained momentum. Although politicians and media outlets suggested that the war was valid and well reasoned, growing numbers of citizens across the nation felt that the goals of the war were obscure. *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange* reflected the divided country during the Vietnam war with a nonsensical premise and impermanent markers used to point to the various sites within the work. The piece contradicts itself, suggesting rationality through its appearance and form, while embodying absurdity and romanticism through the concept that it conveyed.

In *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange* Huebler realized "the significance of the map as a most essential kind of conceptual model,—"[4] though he was not the only artist of the 1960s and the Conceptual movement who was keen on this. Maps were particularly pertinent to Conceptual ideologies that concerned the democratization of art, the use of everyday objects, and the privileging of ideas over art objects. Being both aesthetically appealing and a universal conceptual model, it is no surprise that maps were used by other Conceptual artists of the 1960s, such as On Kawara and Nam June Paik, as a form of documentation in their work. In the case of *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange,* however, Huebler negated the map's functionality.[5] With the incorporation of transitory territory markers as well as romanticized site photographs, Huebler presents viewers with a map that is more characterized by strangeness and mysticism than by logic and rationality.

Maps make imaginary boundaries and borders a lived reality, actively shaping social memory while drawing invisible—yet real—lines. Thus, while there are six literal sites pinpointed in *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange*, the actual site for the work remains open to question: Is the site in the imaginary lines delineated in red, in the physical locations represented by each of the six points, or in the greater space that is bound within the enclosed star shape? Is it in the star-shaped sculptures themselves, or in the physical maps and photographs? Is the site in the mind of the viewer—or does it perhaps not exist at all?

Douglas Huebler: *Site Sculpture Project: Cape Cod Star Shape Exchange*, (detail) 1968; ink and collage on paper maps, and six black-and-white photographs; two panels; 40 × 30 in. ea.: BAMPFA, museum Purchase: Bequest of Therese Bonney, Class of 1916, by exchange.

Can Ice Make Fire? Prove or Disprove

TOBIAS ROSEN

Snow is nature's most elegant eraser. When winter starts, early season storms dampen sharp topographical differences in the landscape. Then, as more snow accumulates, even undulating mounds level and the snowfield becomes an endless, featureless white void. Paul Kos (b. 1942) recorded his video *Ice Makes Fire* (1969/2004) on one of those ubiquitous and anonymous white plains. The snowfield serves to position Kos's video in a non-site; aside from the temperature, viewers do not have any information about Kos's geographical location or his immediate surroundings. Activity on a snowfield occurs as if in vacuum: the system is isolated, and a robust buffer limits outside environmental influence. For these reasons, the snowfield is akin to the scientific abstract site where theoretical and experimental results match. Within this idealized place, viewers can interpret Kos's activity in *Ice Makes Fire* as an experiment. His neat presentation for the camera makes the entire experiment's description available to the viewer:

- Materials: 1) Clear ice slab. 2) Wood kindling.
- Equipment: 1) One concave pot lid.
- Procedure: 1) Spin ice lens on pot lid to form convex lens, flipping intermittently. 2) Raise lens into sunlight and direct focus onto wood. 3) Stoke smoking wood to start flame.
- Results: It is possible to use ice as a magnifying lens to start a fire.

For the entire course of the video, the camera is directed down at the experiment and crops most of Kos's body offscreen. His identity is concealed behind all-black clothing. Kos's only purpose is to facilitate the experiment: he executes each required task that leads to the desired result. In order to establish trustworthiness and non-bias, the artist performs each task transparently. Although viewers must watch Kos hold the lens for almost a full minute before smoke starts to rise from the wood below, his deliberate slowness, and seamless editing, assures that the experiment is not staged.

Before proceeding with my discussion of the experiment within *Ice Makes Fire*, I point out that it is incorrect to call the video an experiment. The viewer does not participate in *Ice Makes Fire*; Kos is the only person who acquires firsthand experiential knowledge that ice can indeed make fire. His audience must instead trust that Kos documents honestly and that video is a faithful translator of information. Therefore, while the action inside the video is an experiment, the video itself is the evidence, or data, of that experiment. As a document, *Ice Makes Fire* is not a direct source of information; instead, the information from the experiment to the viewer is mediated by video.

It is a common technique for contemporary artists to transplant visual imagery from foreign sources into their work. David Ross argues that video art appropriates visual material from popular culture in order to draw "specific attention to the nature of the original surrounding context."[1] *Ice Make Fire* is an appropriation of the scientific method in order to cut against scientific rhetoric. In this way, Kos's video functions as an experiment but, working against the authoritative model of science, also champions the importance of irrationality.

In school, during the mid-sixties at the San Francisco Art Institute, Kos acquired rigorous formal and aesthetic training in painting. After he graduated he intermittently tried making plastic object art, then transitioned again and made it his main artistic goal to reduce the gap between art and everyday life. As a consequence of his new ambition, Kos embraced ordinary materials and started to make dynamic works that existed in time. He was to have a major influence on West Coast Conceptualism and performance art. Kos himself taught one of the earliest Conceptual art classes in the world at Santa Clara University in 1970.[2]

Predating *Ice Makes Fire*, Kos created *Pilot Light/Pilot Butte* (1974), a video of himself starting fire with an ice lens. That work's title is a pun that plays off the interaction between a geographical monument's name and physical appearance. Located in remote western Wyoming, Pilot Butte lights up beautifully throughout the day, and especially during the red colors of sunset and sunrise. After dark, however, the butte naturally becomes invisible. To make certain that the butte would return to its majestic state in the morning, at sundown Kos decided to start a small fire on the butte, mimicking the function of a pilot light on a kitchen stove. This type of wit pervades Kos's oeuvre. In fact, some critics complain that it is difficult to take his work seriously.[3]

Dismissing Kos because of his playful humor misunderstands his underlying skepticism. Contemporary artists are plagued by uncertainties concerning individuality, authenticity, and authority. Part of the history of Conceptualism can be explained through these crises: in order to gain absolute intellectual freedom and defy the model of the artist as someone with exceptional formal training and the creator of objects, artists attempted to dematerialize their work. Hence, they produced works like thought paintings and instruction art. Despite the fact that Kos's work maintains many formal qualities, he does have a particular handling of the question of authority. Kos says, "I trust accidents more than ideas I can come up with sitting at my desk."[4] Instead of causing internal strife and self-doubt by debating legitimacy, Kos boldly resigns some of his artistic agency. He is more interested in pursuing chance and serendipity than defending his artistic identity.

When I discussed the scientific procedure that Kos follows in *Ice Makes Fire*, I intentionally left out the final step. After about a minute of letting the flames burn, Kos unexpectedly places the ice lens atop the fire. By instantly annihilating the flames and

the lens together, Kos halts the established flow of information. Up until this point, *Ice Makes Fire* has served as evidence that, despite physical intuition, ice can make fire. However, isn't that lesson proven true in the first few moments of the film, or even by the film's title? When Kos extinguishes the fire he also scrambles the purpose of the video. Instead of letting his video be support for a coherent and straightforward lesson, Kos pushes his audience to think about the paradoxes of materials. On the one hand, it is possible to cunningly manipulate ice into making fire, but on the other, observe how effortlessly ice puts fire out.

Even though the moment when Kos extinguishes the fire in *Ice Makes Fire* is not directly inspired by chance, it definitely takes the audience by surprise. Taken aback, we are supposed to ask: Why did Kos go through all the trouble of lighting the fire only to put it out? It may seem futile, but extinguishing the fire highlights the underlying structure of viewing: every piece of information on screen is constantly pressured by the audience to collapse into a single narrative.

In 1970, Gene Youngblood published a seminal book on video art and its fundamental connections with contemporary science. His argument is predicated on the idea that as entropy increases it becomes increasingly difficult for energy to change forms. Youngblood then states that information is akin to energy, and as misinformation or redundant information is propagated, societal change also becomes increasingly difficult to achieve. He claims that since the entertainment industry is formulaic, conservative, and filled with clichés, it only fortifies normative values and knowledge. Conversely, he argues that art is "negentropic" because it provides novel and original information.[5] By the end of *Ice Makes Fire*, the fire becomes a redundant symbol; it is visual storage for the same basic lesson that ice can make fire. Therefore, when Kos disappears the fire he refuses to adhere to the entertainment model that

fulfills its audience's desires. Instead, he forces his viewers to reevaluate the meaning of the experiment.

Youngblood's theory of negentropy diverges from the actual physics of *Ice Makes Fire*. More precisely, if the artistic entropy function is considered seriously, it is inversely proportional to the physical entropy function. Although it may seem ridiculous to twist metaphor and science together, this entropic mess puts forth a series of unanswerable questions about limits: Is the entropy of art more than metaphor? Conversely, is the entropy of physics less than truth? When and where do we distinguish nature from theory or model? And what is the relationship between information, evidence, or data and the theories that are extracted from experiments?

Viewers are always indirectly interacting with the appropriation and ultimate violation of the scientific method that takes place in *Ice Makes Fire*. Their relationship with Kos's experiment exists via film and electronic screen. Anne Wagner phrases the underlying question well: "Does confidence in the directness of vision really survive translation and reproduction by technological media?"[6] Perhaps the medium actually relays less than it withholds. Viewers can theorize the contradiction of ice and fire, but they do not get the alchemic feeling of transcending elemental boundaries. In the rational regime, the camera functions as a direct conduit of unaltered information that straightforwardly presents experiments, systems, and actions. *Ice Makes Fire* demonstrates the inaccuracy of this interpretation of the camera. The seemingly transparent capability of the camera is actually rifted by its reductions, and propagates contradictions. Ultimately, Kos is not disenchanted by this loss; he is willing to embrace complexity and unpredictability in its stead.

Paul Kos: *Ice Makes Fire*, 1969/2004; video: color, sound, 2:53 mins; BAMPFA, gift of the artist.

Re-enchantment Through Irony: Language-games, Conceptual Humors, and John Baldessari's Blasted Allegories

HAILI WANG

Against the backdrop of the ongoing processes of rationalization, classification, and bureaucratization in postindustrial America, many artists in the 1960s and 1970s understood the art world to be disenchanted. The expansion of capitalism and materialism impeded pluralistic ways of seeing the world, and a profit-driven art market drove some to create new kinds of work that might resist the logic of the commodity, giving rise to Conceptual art—cheaply made, ephemeral, and sometimes absurd. John Baldessari, a leading Conceptual artist known for his photo-text paintings, explores how language is arbitrarily constructed and perceived. He is not alone in this—other language-based Conceptual artists point out the ironies and discrepancies in the conventional order of language—but in deconstructing and "dematerializing" language, Baldessari imparts new, humorous, imaginative meanings to a disenchanted, materialistic world.

Born 1931 in National City, California, Baldessari received his master's degree from San Diego State College in 1957, then moved to Los Angeles and studied at both Otis Art Institute and Chouinard Art Institute. The vibrant Los Angeles art scene, dominated by well-known figures like John Altoon, Larry Bell, and Ed Ruscha, enabled Baldessari to experiment with different painting subjects and styles. With his humor and sly wit, Baldessari thwarted the expectation for artists to conform to the prevailing serious attitude toward language and text. Questioning the standardization of aesthetics and thumbing his nose at stiff art-world conventions, Baldessari remained at some distance from his contemporaries and used Southern California as a base from which to explore his own artistic vision.

In the early 1960s, Baldessari began taking photographs around National City, without regard to their composition, content, or aesthetic value. Using these snapshot prints as source material, he developed and fixed them on canvas coated with light-sensitive emulsions instead of photographic paper.[1] The resulting prints were imperfect and impermanent. To Baldessari, however, they represented a new kind of painting and a new kind of photograph. In Baldessari's semiotic twist, a photograph could be signified through a canvas, and vice versa. In blurring the boundary between two artistic mediums, Baldessari distanced himself from traditional art practice, a process that was later described by critic Harold Rosenberg as the "de-definition of art."[2] This would also become the earliest moment of Baldessari's conceptual interventions, as the materials for painting and photography became interchangeable and lost their inherent significance.

The year 1968 marked a significant turning point for Baldessari, when his photo-text paintings were shown for the first time at Gallery 669 in Los Angeles. The exhibition featured many already well-known Conceptual artists dealing with semiotics, including Joseph Kosuth, who showed a series of dictionary definitions of the word "nothing."[3] Although questioning the institutional definitions of "nothing," Kosuth did not make the word funny or irreverent, in contrast to Baldessari who attempted to tear apart language and create unexpected, amusing linguistic juxtapositions. Becoming aware of an emerging Conceptual art practice across the nation yet retaining his unique sense of humor, Baldessari furthered his interest in language, semiotics, and signifying systems, themes he had already begun exploring in his early photo-canvases.

At the same time, Baldessari was increasingly influenced by the writings of German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, who developed the idea of language-games. Wittgenstein observes that language, like a game, entails a set of arbitrary, propositional rules, as they do not hold any inherent meaning to people outside the game. The order and logic of language is strictly defined and constructed, operating within the dominant cultural and institutional framework, which, in turn, creates systems of classification regulating one's perception of information. Echoing Wittgenstein's question of why there is no "reddish green" or "bluish orange," Baldessari realized that his early photo-text paintings pointed toward the new direction of his work, which would continue to expose the viewer to the arbitrary relationship between visual information and institutional language. Rather radically, in 1970, Baldessari destroyed all his previous paintings to begin his new conceptual journey, as the actual materiality of art gave away its significance to the ideas behind art.

In his 1978 series *Blasted Allegories*, Baldessari plays along with the idea of language-games to resist fixed relations between words and images. Consisting of more than one hundred works, the *Blasted Allegories* series combines texts, film stills, and fragmentary images taken from television commercials and news reports. Each image is filtered through a different colored lens, mounted on card, and assigned an associative word; these are then arranged according to an alphabetical and color-based sequence. Interestingly, this process of arranging random images into grids and sequences would recall Baldessari's own habit of collecting movie stills in his studio. As Baldessari started buying archival movies and photographs as source material for his work, he would categorize them into files or boxes. Using methods of classification from Claude Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology, he organized these archival materials under binary terms like "chaos or order," "good or evil," "hard or soft," and "male or female."[4] It came as no surprise, then,

when Baldessari observed the impossibility and absurdity of associating images with institutional language, as one "could categorize an image in a hundred different ways."[5] By repeating the arbitrary organizational schemes in *Blasted Allegories*, Baldessari, therefore, also reveals to the audience the irony and absurdity of creating such binary classifications, which have been normalized as rational and logical.

In *Blasted Allegories (Colorful Sentences: Announce)* (1978), for instance, four color-filtered images, each with its own assigned caption, are aligned neatly and horizontally at the center of the composition. At the upper-left corner, another image, photographed directly from the TV screen, shows a reporter with her microphone. On a literal or pictorial level, the narrative goes with the reporter announcing the words below: "suspend," "empty," "trial," and "power." Upon first glance, the audience would try to associate each word with one of the four images. Indeed, the cup on the left is empty, as demonstrated by both its visual form and the caption below. Curiously, Baldessari also raises the question whether the cup would still be associated with "emptiness" if the word "empty" were not shown below it, as it is also red, glassy, and reflective. As the language-game goes, Baldessari demonstrates that the meaning of a word or image is rather constructed in juxtapositions, in a mutually signifying process. Baldessari's critique of language also echoes many other Conceptual artists' efforts to resist commodity culture and institutional confinements, because language can be easily manipulated and subtly framed in the cause of selling, buying, regulating, and policing.

In the process of tearing apart the established linguistic norms, Baldessari, consequently, opens up infinite possibilities for creating new ways of communications, often humorous or even ironic in tone. In *Blasted Allegories*, the four words,

juxtaposed with tinted imagery, constitute a new sentence, whose meaning cannot be captured in denotative language. The semantic disruption and grammatical breakdown liberate the audience's imagination from the constraints of logic, showing that language is irrational, as are human senses. Re-signified in pluralistic ways, language no longer regulates one's senses but stimulates them. The phrase "blasted allegories," once used by the American novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, describes allegory as a curse, because an allegory confuses the reader with its many implied meanings. Through Baldessari's linguistic breakdown, however, "blasted allegories" not only means "cursed" but also "exploded," as every word becomes a floating signifier to be rearranged in unconventional, amusing juxtapositions.[6] Therefore, Baldessari's use of language and irony re-enchants a "rational" world and offers the liberating joy of upsetting rules, hierarchies, and conventions.[7]

Although often categorized as a Conceptual artist, Baldessari, because of his wit and irreverence, continued to work apart from the more straightforward language-based Conceptual artists in New York such as Kosuth. In fact, Kosuth described Baldessari's work as not Conceptual art, because the use of comic irony fell into the realm of Pop art.[8] To Baldessari, on the other hand, the term Conceptualism, like any other word, remains ultimately a floating signifier, one that could always be imbued with the absurd.

Fragments and Ruptures: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Mouth to Mouth*

BYUNG KWON (B. K.) KIM

Born in Korea in 1951, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha came to the United States as a child. The family first lived in Hawaii, eventually settling in California. As an adult, Cha's frequent relocations continued. She lived in the Bay Area, France, and finally New York, where she was brutally assaulted and murdered in 1982.[1] Inspired by her lifelong journey, discursively and literally navigating through transient spaces, Cha created a body of work that explored displacement, identity, and acculturation. She treated each of these recurring themes conceptually, representing them through various new art practices and dematerialized means. Films, videos, mail art projects, performances, prints, and books—she moved between and hybridized these genres, challenging the boundaries of discrete media in her work. In her performance art, she often utilized her own body as a material, as she explored constructions of the self. Similarly, in her other pieces, she examined the fluid nature of identity: specifically, how our identities become situated and fragmented by displacement.

Though Cha's life ended prematurely at thirty-one, in her brief time she created an overwhelming and mature portfolio of works. Cha was most active and intellectually fruitful during her nearly decade-long affiliation with the University of California, Berkeley—where from 1969 to 1978 she sequentially amassed two Bachelor of Arts and two Master's degrees in Comparative Literature and Art.[2] The Bay Area and the university provided an essential artistic backdrop for Cha and her works. She received her education in a time of political instability and the social movements of the era, including the civil rights movement, second-wave feminism, antiwar sentiments, and other efforts to empower the marginalized. Like many in the Bay Area and across the U.S., Cha was influenced by these tidal waves of social unrest and change.

As an avid fan of cinema and as a Francophile, at Berkeley Cha regularly watched films and immersed herself in French literature, combining these interests with her special love for *cinéma français*. Her passion for films was largely a byproduct of classes she took with Professor Bertrand Augst.[3] She familiarized herself with film theory, specifically structural film analysis, and began to actively apply its ideas in her works. Her incorporation of film theory in her art and her interest in film as an artistic medium is akin to that of Stephen Laub, who attended Berkeley from 1962 to 1970, and whose experimental video works are also featured in the *Mind Over Matter* exhibition. Both Cha and Laub explore the mutability of identity and draw attention to conditions of spectatorship. However, whereas Laub employs the body and silhouette in vintage photographs as a means to examine identity, Cha is more attentive to language and its context within identity formation. In this sense, her works are also reminiscent of other Korean and Korean American artists such as Yi Sang and David Hoon Kim, who actively integrate English, French, and Korean into their works.

Cha's work also resonates with another Korean American artist, Nam June Paik, part of the Fluxus group, and a pioneer of video art. Like Cha, Paik often incorporated music in his video works. However, in contrast to Paik's dynamic and sometimes incessant use of music, Cha strategically placed moments of silence throughout her videos, creating breaks and ruptures in the soundtrack. Cha's moments of inaudible pause create an opening or pause for the audience to respond to the artwork. Though these silences potentially instigate misinterpretations and frustrations, for Cha, art exists as a means for her and the audience to converse; as she wrote, "i can only assume that you can hear me/ i can only hope that you hear me."[4] Ultimately, the presence of silences in Cha's works underscores her commitment to connecting with her audience.

Take, for instance, *Mouth to Mouth* (1975), which is particularly intriguing for its silences. The video only lasts seven minutes and forty seconds, but it conveys a world of meaning. Filmed in black and white, *Mouth to Mouth* begins with a slow panning shot of the Korean vowels: ㅏ, ㅑ, ㅜ, ㅓ, ㅕ ,ㅡ, ㅗ, ㅛ.[5] After a momentary pause, a blurry close-up shot emerges of Cha attempting to enunciate the vowels. Her mouth opens and the lips move, mimicking the act of speaking, yet she remains voiceless. In disbelief, "she waits inside the pause"[6] and tries a second time, repeating the same result, no sound issuing from her mouth. The viewers are left yearning for another attempt while a soundtrack of white noise, running water, and bird songs begins to engulf the silence, obliterating any chance that her voice might be heard. Following her last failed attempt to speak comes a prolonged scene of video static creating a rupture in the narrative of the video.

The difficulty Cha has enunciating the most basic Korean vowels seems to signify a loss of language. Those who have traveled for a prolonged period to a place where their native tongue is not spoken understand that, without daily practice, language is subject to deterioration. Language requires frequent use; otherwise, one gradually loses the ability to speak it. The sound of running water in the video seems to highlight this slow erosion, particularly as, within a Korean context, water is synonymous with time. In Buddhist texts familiar to most Koreans, numerous metaphors and associations are drawn between water and time. Furthermore,
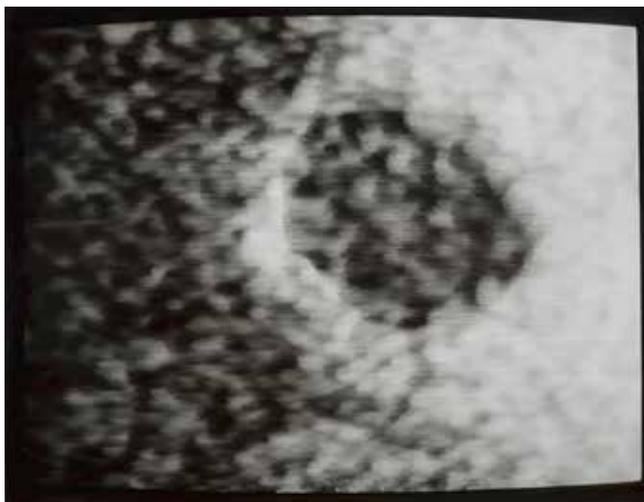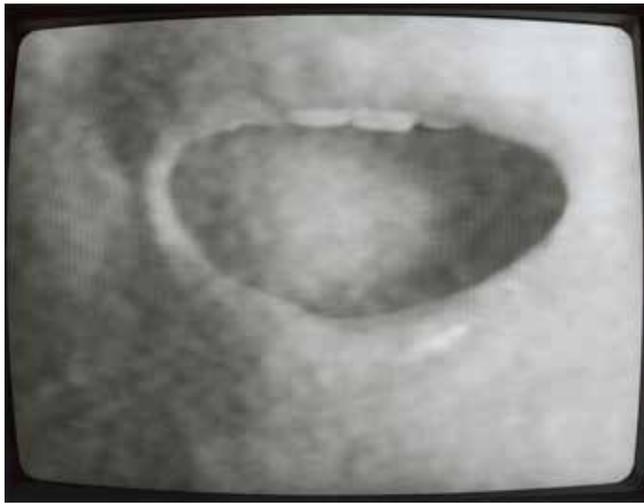
linguistically, in Korean one says that time "flows" (흐르다 eureuda), as in "water flows," to indicate the passage of time. Therefore, the disruptions by the water sound during the interludes between Cha's attempts to speak seem to symbolize the passage of time and its deleterious effect in maintaining a language. The absence of two vowels, ㅠ and ㅣ, from the list strengthens this theory.[7] The two vowels have already been forgotten. Cha, having been away from her home country for more than a decade, made evident in *Mouth to Mouth* the materiality of the loss of language.

Cha's persistent effort to sound out her mother tongue signifies her wish to retain the natural language against its disappearance. In fact, as a consequence of Cha's geographical displacement, she had to acquire a new and strange language, and though she achieved fluency, English would always feel foreign to her. For Cha, physical displacement from her native country was simultaneously a linguistic disruption, and in *Mouth to Mouth* her relentless attempt to sound out the vowels hopes to mend the distance of these dual displacements.

The effort to enunciate Korean vowels also functioned as a means for Cha to empathize with her mother, like the artist herself, a victim of geographical displacement due to political turmoil. Hyung Soon Huo was born in Yong Jung (Longjing), in Manchuria, where her family had relocated to escape the rule of imperial Japan. However, when Japan's imperial power reached Manchuria in 1937, Koreans in exile were forced, like those who remained in Korea, to acquire Japanese and speak it. They were forbidden to converse in any other language.[8] Cha makes it clear in her semiautobiographical novel *Dicteé* that she felt profound empathy toward her mother's pain. In the book, she says to her mother, "[the language you speak] is not your own . . . The tongue that is forbidden is your own mother tongue. You speak in the dark."[9] Reading this text next to *Mouth to Mouth* suggests that Cha's continuous attempt to enunciate Korean vowels was a way for her to speak alongside her mother. Forming the vowels without sound is a way to connect with her mother's linguistic and physical displacement by accentuating her own impotence to speak the language. Coincidently, the word "vowel" in Korean is *Moeum* (모음/母音), literally, Mother Sound.[10]

Mouth to Mouth is structured by a series of fragmentary scenes and interludes, echoing the structure of films by Jean-Luc Godard—a central figure in French cinema who Cha admired—which one critic has described as "composed entirely of fragments."[11] The fragmentation is increased by the presence of pauses in the video; in addition, the fragments seem to be scrambled. Though the first two Korean vowels shown are in alphabetical order, the remaining six follow no logical sequence. Through ruptures and nonsequential ordering, Cha questions the assumption that narratives, or even language itself, must be presented in a linear fashion. She suggests that postmodern tactics, which disrupt the metanarrative and the coherency of a story, might function as the ideal form for her to represent identities fragmented by displacements. The video not only is a means to examine how displacements shape language and identities, but is simultaneously a way for Cha to present and advance her artistic vision. Like her own brief but full life, this short, densely evocative video demonstrates Cha's power as an artist.

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: *Mouth to Mouth*, 1975; video: black and white, sound, 8 mins; BAMPFA, gift of the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Memorial Foundation.

The Same Smile: Negotiating Masculinity in Stephen Laub's *Relations*

GABRIEL J. CARR

If you close your eyes, can you envision your mother's smile? Holding it in your mind, can you smile the same smile? In 1970, Bay Area Conceptual artist Stephen Laub (b. 1945) began a performance project called *Relations*. He would project photographs of his ancestors on a white wall, then, wearing white clothes, "climb" into their projected bodies.[1] In a 1973 interview with *Avalanche* magazine, Laub said, "If they're smiling then I try to smile. It starts out as me trying to assume their position but then I find I don't have to try—I know how my dad smiles, or I know what a lot of my mom's expressions are like."[2] Aunts, uncles, grandmothers, his mother's friends: Laub would perform this act of inhabiting their poses across boundaries of age, culture, and, notably, gender.

In the early seventies, Laub was a forerunner of Conceptual artists making identity one of his central themes. The situations Laub put his body in—matching it to the bodies of relatives found in old photographs—were radically different from the performances of other well-known male artists of the time, which were often characterized by violence to their bodies. In *Relations*, Laub interacted empathetically across boundaries of gender, literally putting himself in someone else's position; by destabilizing the boundaries between self and other, he challenged patriarchal norms taken for granted by other male performance artists. The exploration of the multiplicity of identity itself makes Laub's Conceptual project quite unusual for its time, akin to that of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, who was a student in a graduate seminar Laub taught at UC Berkeley.

Laub collected hundreds of family photos for *Relations*; for each performance, he would put a new slide carousel into the projector. As he stood in a dark room, the slide came on and he, looking into a mirror, scooted this way and that, turned, tilted, smiled, furrowed his brow—the result being a fusion of his body and his relative's image. Unfortunately, a single photograph of the performance does not clearly expose the means by which Laub arrives in a melded state with his relatives—the time spent *adjusting*. Live performances would often go on for hours, however, and the viewer might witness either the adjusting or a brief moment of stillness: "I could hear them whispering, 'Oh, whats this dumb photograph doing on the wall?' And then I would move a little bit, go out of sync. Then I'd hear this 'Oh!' It was that close."[3] The visitor glimpses Laub as a covert performer, deep in the process of a personal project.

Art critic Lucy Lippard defines Conceptual art as art in which the "idea is paramount and the material form is secondary."[4] Dematerialization paired with the decommodification of art led artists to critique the exclusive ideologies and institutions (authorship, ownership, museum and gallery structures) that had traditionally given art value. Lippard states, "This attack on the notion of originality, 'the artist's touch,' and the competitive aspects of individual style constituted an attack on the genius theory, the hitherto most cherished aspect of patriarchal, ruling-class art."[5] Laub's project is in line with what Lippard terms Conceptual art's "escape attempts." Using only a slide projector, a white wall, the artist's body, and a mirror, the form of *Relations* is ephemeral, inexpensive —it is the idea that becomes the center of the piece. As an artistic project, it works toward the imaginative freedom envisioned by Conceptual artists. Laub's entry point to this freedom is developing a complex understanding of identity.

Lippard contextualizes the Conceptual art movement by noting parallels between its anti-establishment politics and other cultural movements of its time, such as the antiwar movement, civil rights, the counterculture, and, not least, the women's liberation movement. Laub's work can also be seen in relation to the growth of radical feminism around 1970 as he attempts to inhabit a space of openness beyond the gender binary. Feminist thinker bell hooks centers patriarchal domination at the heart of the oppression of women. Her book *The Will to Change* discusses the effects of patriarchy and the importance of men working to create a liberated masculinity not characterized by sexist domination. Not only does this damage women, but it harms men as well: hooks describes how "patriarchy demands of all males that they engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation, that they kill off the emotional parts of themselves."[6] She points to this as a critical reason why masculinity is so characterized by violence, and why traits such as vulnerability and emotional awareness are denigrated.

The uniqueness of Laub's *Relations* can be seen when comparing it to works by two more prominent male performance artists of the early 1970s, Chris Burden and Vito Acconci. Burden was shot in the arm with a .22 caliber rifle for his most famous performance, *Shoot*, (1971),[7] and for *Through the Night Softly* (1973)[8] he crawled through fifty feet of broken glass on his bare belly.[9] Acconci also created pieces in which he assaulted himself, as when he bit himself, hard, everywhere his mouth could reach[10] for *Trademarks* (1970).[11] These violent acts were feats of endurance, and much has been written on the complex ways they charge and complicate the relationship between audience and artwork, though their connection to patriarchal norms is not often addressed. Laub's works, in comparison, might initially seem less shocking or dramatic—certainly the tone of the *Relations* project was not destructive or painful. However, this project explored identity in

a new and committed way and proposes a fresh transgression of gender norms.

While not doing violence with or to his body, Laub nevertheless interacts with historical, memorial, and cultural pain and loss. Situating himself among the complex histories of his ancestors places him at the confluence of intersecting vectors of struggle. His ancestors were Eastern and Central European Jews who fled Nazi oppression during the mid-twentieth century. When they emigrated, these photo albums were the only documents of family history they brought with them. In an effort to heal the memorial and cultural rifts, Laub brings his present to his relatives' world with projected light. This foreshadows contemporary Jewish American artist Shimon Attie, whose works *Sites Unseen* (1991–98), *The Writing on the Wall* (1991–93), and *Trains* (1993) involved the projection of photographs of past Jewish communities onto their present sites throughout Europe, making visible the loss of the Holocaust and the absence of these memories in public space today.[12] The projector becomes a magical tool of juxtaposition, allowing situations to come together across time and culture, each keeping its integrity, but brought together with light.

Bathing himself in the projected light of his ancestors, Laub explores photographic viewership and the photographed world as a method of building identity. He says, "What I'm doing is taking this identification literally, and trying to go back to where I come from."[13] Adjusting into the bodies of his relatives takes time, and the small movements communicate an ethic of care for every person in each photograph. In this way, Laub expands the ongoing process of identification. Even when Laub has matched his silhouette nearly perfectly with the outline of the body in the photograph, we can still see his big curly hair, dark eyebrows, and the faint outline of his shoulders and bellbottoms, a testament to his presence as a Jewish man in the 1970s coexisting with the memory of his relative. In *The Will to Change*, hooks asks her readers who identify as men to imagine a feminist masculinity, a masculinity that reflects the values of radical feminism; "Feminist masculinity would have as its chief constituents integrity, self-love, emotional awareness, assertiveness, and relational skill, including the capacity to be empathetic, autonomous, and connected."[14] *Relations* communicates a dedication to these values. What happens when a son explores the specificity of his mother or grandmother's smile, their body language? These intimate expressions create a dialogue of empathy across time and space.

Relations can be described as a search for meaning. Each time Laub climbs into the body of another one of his relatives, he embarks upon a new lesson. As Laub said in his interview with *Avalanche*, "Through dealing with these slide projections, I am becoming more aware of all the minute physical and psychological similarities projected on me by my social conditioning. . . . Maybe it helps me more than the people who see them."[15] The work is deeply personal, and though the demand on the audience might be less dramatic than in Burden or Acconci's work, the implied demand runs in a deeper vein of change. This reflects hooks's charge for men to develop a personal lifelong project to transform masculinity. *Relations* is a call to engage with the parts of our identity that, in the face of our culture, could be forgotten, whether these are family history, ethnicity, or gender. We all have the capacity to think of our identity as a project, a site where we can explore or transform and liberate ourselves.

Stephen Laub: *Relations*, 1973; performance, *All Night Sculptures*, Museum of Conceptual Art (MOCA), San Francisco; color photocopy; 11 × 8½ in.; BAMPFA, gift of the Naify Family.

Who Is Roberta Breitmore?

RYAN SERPA

Who is Roberta Breitmore? Since she was introduced in 1974, questions have swirled around the specifics of her existence, her closeness to reality, and her status as a person. The deceptively simple answer is that Roberta Breitmore is Lynn Hershman Leeson and Lynn Hershman Leeson is Roberta Breitmore. Hershman Leeson (b. 1941), a California-based Conceptual artist, created and performed as Roberta, a character of her own design, for an extended art project that took place over the course of four years (1974–78).[1] She acted out Roberta not just as a staged show in a theater or as a street spectacle, but in everyday life, a parallel persona to Hershman Leeson. The artist established Roberta's existence through credit cards and bank accounts as well as a driver's license. Roberta had a therapist and attended Weight Watchers—all the makings of a "real" person —and obtained bureaucratic evidence to prove her legal identity. Her performance presented Roberta as a fictional but entirely possible human being, as if someone found a diary and lived out the events narrated within its pages.

Through careful documentation, Hershman Leeson established the following narrative: In 1974 Roberta came into existence and "moved" to San Francisco via a Greyhound bus with $1,800 to her name. A recent divorcée, she checked into the Dante Hotel and placed an ambiguous personal ad that read, "WOMAN, Cauc. seeks bright companion to share rent & interests."[2] Roberta's ad invited both platonic and romantic responses of any gender, limited only by the readership of the newspaper. The personal ad served a purpose for Roberta that was beyond its stated, yet vague, solicitation for a companion. It began Hershman Leeson's paper trail for Roberta: a documentation of her life, albeit a mysterious one, that legitimized her personhood and tracked her existence. The ad does not act as definitive evidence that she lives in San Francisco—it is not an indexical marker or proof of her life—but rather, it *suggests* she exists. Even if it provided little information about her and her desires, the ad produced a conceptual idea of a person.

The ad was merely the beginning of Hershman Leeson's creation of abstruse Roberta evidence: diary entries, a psychiatric assessment, photographs, dental x-rays, and even a "lost" button were some of the items Hershman Leeson placed in Roberta's archive of personal belongings.[3] These objects provide particular snippets of knowledge about the production of Roberta while avoiding giving away much actual information about who she was. We can gather that she could drive, suffered from psychological troubles, and maintained her teeth, but what does that really say about a person? Did Roberta *like* to drive? Did she have a strong aptitude for politics? What were her other interests? With all the evidence at hand it seems easy to summon facts about Roberta and even craft something of a biography, but it remains nearly impossible to answer the question "Who is Roberta Breitmore?" on anything but the most generic level.

Rather than making Roberta an interesting individual with a colorful personality, Hershman Leeson constructed her as an enigmatic case to be cracked—she exists as a dark mystery shrouded in secrecy rather than a sharply defined and specific persona. The type of ephemera that Roberta left behind includes surveillance photographs, medical records, and even a driver's license perceivably stained with blood. Such items could all serve as forms of evidence, yet they serve a more oblique function than their status as mere biographical records suggests: the audience is titillated by a certain voyeuristic pleasure in accessing these intimate things. Viewing them is akin to the thrilling danger of continually looking over your shoulder while reading someone's diary and the necessity of a locked door when cracking open a confidential medical file. The relics allow easy access to Roberta's world, creating an intimate picture of her deeply troubled psyche and tumultuous personal life. Hershman Leeson's success or failure with her project does not rest on her ability to craft an actual human being. On the contrary, she intentionally presents a macabre form of esoteric invention. Roberta exists as an obscure figure who invites—but ultimately thwarts—the viewer's investigations. A quasi-cinematic character rather than a flesh-and-bones person, Roberta presents as an apparition whose specter-like presence is in tune with the long tradition of film noir.

Hershman Leeson's entire project borrows heavily from noir, with its emphasis on shadows, sharp angles, suspense, and mystery. Contrary to standard genre categorizations such as drama, action, or romantic comedy, the label "noir" emphasizes style and tone rather than content.[4] Setting and plot vary wildly across noir movies, but the presence of a shadowy danger persists. Classic noir films, such as *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, 1941), and neo-noir films like Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), for example, delve into the darkness of urbanity and display mind-bending investigations into elusive characters. While the *Roberta Breitmore* project uses some of these strategies of engagement, Hershman Leeson reverses one trope of the noir genre: the femme fatale.

In classic film noir, the femme fatale is often a troubling but hypnotic cipher who leaves destruction in her seductive path. She maintains little in the way of personality, is frequently blonde, and her main function is temptation. Even as a victim, she is often dragging the world down with her,

acting as a destructive force in the lives of the men trying to save her. In Hershman Leeson's recalibrated noir narrative, Roberta embodies many of these qualities. Her blondeness, detachment, and potential psychosis make her a near-perfect candidate for a femme fatale, but in her narrative these qualities are explained, if not excused, through various traumatic interactions she endured: a near abduction, pressure from her therapist to attend Weight Watchers, and intensely creepy interactions with those who answered her personal ad. Roberta is forced to play two roles in her own manufactured life: entertainer and casualty. She must both intrigue the viewer and display her victimhood through a fragmented record of evidence, straddling the line between a trope character and true trauma. Hershman Leeson capitalizes on the seductive nature of the femme fatale and repurposes it to make Roberta's everyday psychological agony into intriguing entertainment.

But the artist does not just leave this troubling story of Roberta in pieces. She pastes them together to forge a fragmented narrative in the form of a comic book. *Roberta Breitmore (An Alchemical Portrait Started in 1975)* contains none of the flashy motifs commonly associated with classic American comics. Instead, its pages are filled with black-and-white images of thinly connected vignettes from Roberta's "life" and subtle references to noir.[5]

The book begins with a portrait of Hershman Leeson/Roberta framed within a star that shows the beginnings of her physical transformation and quickly transitions to the aforementioned personal ad. In the sixth frame, Roberta "muses" upon a response to her ad. She is viewed from a sharp, high angle with a dense shadow falling behind her, echoing noir conventions. Roberta meets the responder — an apparent abuser—in a park, where he tells her, "I just smacked her a few times." The threatening meetings continue when she is propositioned by grim figures in an amusement park. Various anecdotes, both harsh and comedic, are illustrated throughout the strip until the final three frames, which pick up on the disparate traumas plaguing Roberta and embrace noir in full force.

They begin with Roberta strolling down a trash-strewn street, the odd angle making her seem at once close and far away. Her face is obscured and the text block reads, "Time passes; blue turns to grey," a reference to her own depression, the stark colors of the comic, and the gray ambiguity of Roberta's life. The penultimate image depicts Roberta's checkbook and the dwindling funds in her savings account and is captioned, "Roberta sees the end of the line and withdraws into her future." It acts as a final document, the last evidence of Roberta. She is shrinking just as her funds are. The comic ends with an image of the Golden Gate Bridge that looks more like a photographic negative than a drawing. Severe black lines make up the bridge, the cars, and even the wind. An ominous darkness overtakes the scene, furthered by its caption, "To be
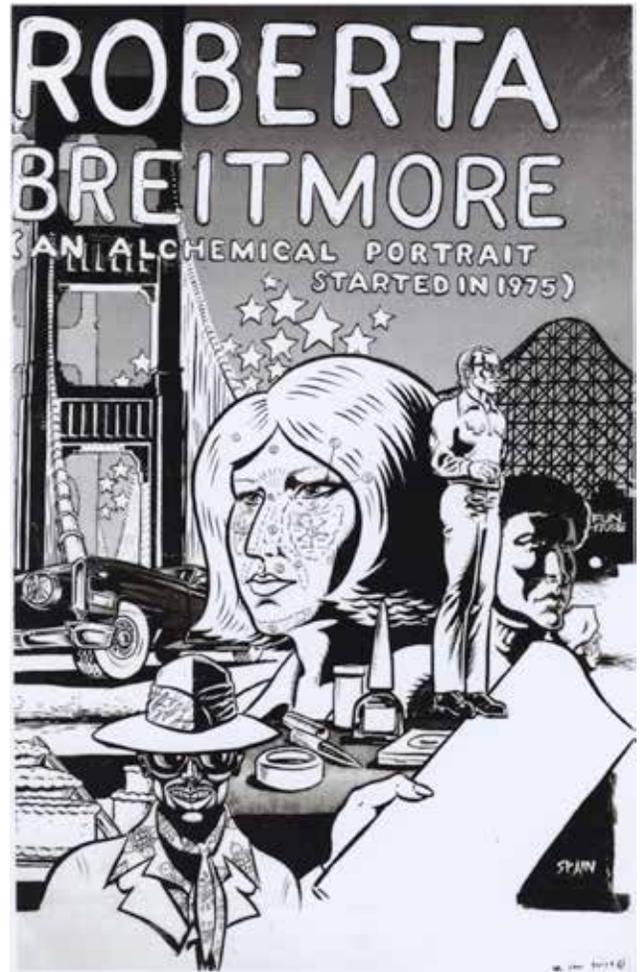
continued?" The image references a photograph titled *Roberta Contemplating Suicide on the Golden Gate Bridge* that shows Roberta walking across the bridge, apparently contemplating taking her own life.[6] Each incident seems unimportant, even trivial, when taken separately, but together these physical and emotional traumas build to a dramatic conclusion that shows their cumulative effect on Roberta: suicide.

The synthetic narrative displayed in the comic book makes sense of the disparate objects provided by the archive of Roberta evidence. Its patchwork of images and narratives mirrors the fragments of evidence that construct Roberta's life. Author and viewer can jump from one frame to the next without directly tying each together, providing a form that gathers the splintered account of Roberta. Given the graphic, black-and-white nature of the comic, it is the ideal medium for presenting this noir narrative.

Lynn Hershman Leeson and Spain Rodriguez: *Roberta Breitmore (An Alchemical Portrait Started in 1975)* (detail), 1975; six black-and-white photographs; 11 × 8½ in. ea.; BAMPFA, courtesy of the artist.

Yoko Ono's *Grapefruit*: Art, Viewer, and the Sound of One Hand Clapping

SAMANTHA AGONCILLO

The wildly imaginative and seemingly cryptic event scores of Yoko Ono's *Grapefruit* plant seeds of wonder in the viewer's mind. Many of the instructions are whimsical and nonsensical in nature and ask the physically impossible, as each piece encourages us to bend the limits of the mind, body and subjective reality. Terse yet profoundly crafted situations and images of nature and the commonplace catalyze a psychic flourishing of ideas surrounding questions of self-making, self-awareness, spirituality, language, and communication. *Grapefruit* and other artworks by Ono elevate the creative power of the mind and blur the distinction between artist and audience, art and life, and the imaginary and the real. In this way, Ono uproots the classical tradition of art as a concrete object, such as a painting or sculpture. While the word is the material of the art object, the mind is the mechanism by which the art exists. The idea conceived in the mind is the art itself.

One aspect of her work that sets Ono (b. 1933) apart from her contemporaries is the convergence of her distinctly authentic expression of Zen Buddhist philosophies and Fluxus styles of thinking. Because many of her early works preceded the official formation of the Fluxus Conceptual art collective, Ono establishes her role as a seminal innovator in Conceptual art. Several foundational ideologies in Zen and Fluxus coincide, including the motif of flowing, the reciprocal dynamic between teacher/artist and student/viewer, the blurring of boundaries between subject and object, the emphasis on the present moment and ephemerality, and the intersection of the subjective art of performance and the act of meditation.

If Ono's contributions came to be a cornerstone in Conceptual and performance art, it was not as immediately or effortlessly as contemporary male artists'. The sixties are duly noted as a time when there was a positive surge in social activism, yet the systematic oppression of women of color and other marginal groups still endured, and this was true for an art world often dominated by white men. Indeed, only in recent years has Ono been credited with creating the earliest instances of conceptualism globally. After renouncing the realm of academia, the artist began loosely associating herself with international art circles in Japan, Europe, and the United States. Her knowledge of Japanese philosophic discipline and experience in engaging with transnational artists and thinkers informed her idea-based works.

Ono's *Painting to Hammer a Nail* (1961) is exemplary of this. A white canvas with a hammer attached by chain and a container of loose nails urges the viewer to do exactly as the title suggests. At face value, the task seems novel and fun in the context of the "white cube gallery space," but it foreshadows something much more ominous: the thousands of deaths that occurred during the Vietnam War. The act itself is reminiscent of nailing down coffin lids. The piece is staged as a game for the viewer to participate in, yet it alludes to the civil subject's own complicity in war and violence. This convergence of humor, irony, participation, and radical critique of both the art and political institution influenced the direction that Fluxus would take in the near future. George Maciunas, a key organizer of Fluxus, admired Ono's work so enthusiastically that he invited her to formally join the group, but she declined, for she did not want to limit herself to a singular artistic scope. She did, however, accept Maciunas's offer to exhibit her instruction paintings at AG Gallery in 1961, which catalyzed a series of important events leading up to the recognition of Ono's artistic career. The "paintings" presented were not literal paintings, but instructions printed in black ink on white paper. The word "painting" stands in as a metaphor for the creative activity occurring in the mind of the viewer.

Painting to Hammer a Nail and other early works formed the foundation of *Grapefruit*, a compilation of poetic instructions that similarly plays on traditional notions of painting. The first publication of *Grapefruit* (1964) contained over 150 instruction works, and was divided into five sections: *Music*, *Painting*, *Event*, *Poetry*, and *Object*, with an additional section recording past exhibitions and performances. Each section is dedicated to an influential figure in Ono's career such as John Cage and La Monte Young. In the later editions, the sections *Film*, *Dance*, *To the Wesleyan People* (1966), and additional instructional works were incorporated. The pieces are plainly written in black ink, aligned left and centered neatly on a white page. Some pieces include inscriptions and drawings made by Ono. Numerical pagination is omitted, but each of the works are distinguished by the date they were conceived.

Grapefruit's collection of thought-experiments demarcates itself as a principal piece in the formation of Conceptualism: "Idea is paramount," and the stuff of art is essentially "dematerialized."[1] The materiality of the book, white pages bound together and instructions printed in black ink, is critically downplayed in order to elevate the idea and performative action, either real or imaginary. Written language is the object by which the idea is generated; the art does not exist materially. It is anti-art in its unprecedented form and philosophy, for it interrogates, rejects, and seeks to destroy traditional modes of art and culture. But when art deems itself anti-art and nonmaterial, it is crucial to consider whether it is truly so. Though the art is manifested through

the viewer's engagement, the book undeniably still exists as a tangible art object.

The dynamic between the viewer and artist in *Grapefruit* replicates the relationship of a Zen teacher and student. In Zen tradition, a teacher presents a student with a k an, a riddle that seems physically impossible to solve and requires active mental concentration. A common example is "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" Victor Hori describes the k an as "both the object being sought and the relentless seeking itself. . . . When one realizes ('makes real') this identity, then two hands have become one. The practitioner becomes the k an that he or she is trying to understand. That is the sound of one hand."[2] In the context of *Grapefruit*, the same interplay can be applied to the artist, viewer, and art object. Ono presents the art object and the viewer chooses whether or not to interact with the piece— that is the only way the art can exist. This too is the sound of one hand clapping.

Similarly, *Shadow Piece* (1963) succinctly demonstrates the problem of the impossible and the creative power of the mind as the solution. The piece instructs: "Put your shadows together until / they become one." Generally speaking, a person can have only one shadow. Does the piece become complete after one realizes this? Perhaps Ono also refers to a metaphorical, inner shadow. This piece not only illustrates the relational dynamics between Zen teacher and student, but also illuminates the central Zen notion of nondualism. Converging the outer projection of the self into one also allows an inner unification of physical and spiritual identity. The distinction between subject and object is obscured. By engaging in this complex conceptual experience, the viewer, like the student, is both the subject and the object being sought.

A crucial principle of practicing Zen is centering consciousness on the "ever-passing present moment as the only mode of actual existence."[3] Zen ideologies of flow align with the ever-changing nature of Ono's work and the ephemeral nature of Fluxus event scores.[4] Zen flow emphasizes immersion in each present moment: using the immediacy of the now to become creative and productive. These ideas of flow are manifested in Ono's *water talk* (1967), which plays with the theme of the malleability of the mind and the power to perceive and become one with the "other." Ono writes: "we're all water in different containers / that's why it's so easy to meet /. . . but even after the water's gone / we'll probably point out to the containers / and say, 'that's me there, that one.' / we're container minders." Similarly, Fluxus resists being compartmentalized as any one designated entity. Rather, it changes, and is always in flux. Indeed, in the Fluxus *Manifesto*, Maciunas literally defines it as "flowing," flexible, fluid.

Furthermore, Ono's instruction pieces are ephemeral instances of meditation, a crucial component of Zen practice. Each score solicits the viewer's attention and imagination, as many of the whimsical epigram-like instructions in *Grapefruit* confound logic or incite the impossible. Thus these pieces

transmit a "flow" of ideas to be imagined or performed that ultimately grounds the subjective conscious mind to the present moment. A simple example of meta-meditation transpires in *Echo Telephone Piece* (1964): "Get a telephone that only echoes back your voice. / Call every day and talk about many things." In this experiment, one mimics a sort of mindfulness that is central to Zen philosophy. Whether it be imagined or actualized, the viewer establishes a deeper connection to the self by merely focusing on the present moment, feeling, and state of being. The insistence on calling every day to talk to oneself is a sort of spiritual practice.

To define *Grapefruit* and the works of Yoko Ono solely through the Fluxus and Zen canon may be too confining, especially as both philosophies critically center on ideas of fluidity. Limiting her work to these perspectives, in some ways, denies its universality. The magic of experiencing *Grapefruit* fades; the artist's voice loses its luster. Despite the inclination to categorize the work, *Grapefruit* holds its place in art history as an unprecedented Conceptual piece that explores the whimsy of the everyday, the beauty of poetic instruction and performance, and the transformation of the viewer into art itself.

Yoko Ono: *Grapefruit*, 1964/1971; artist's book: offset printing on paper, perfect bound; 5¼ × 5¼ × 1 in.; BAMPFA, gift of Jacquelyn Baas.

Fluxkits

TAYLOR OSMAN

George Maciunas opened his 1963 *Fluxus Manifesto* with several definitions of the word "fluxus," including "to affect, or bring to a certain state, by subjecting to, or treating with, a flux." He continues to mimic typical dictionary style by using the word in context: "'*Fluxed* into another world.'" The concept that fluxus art has the capacity to bring one into another world is particularly apparent when looking at the fluxkits—small boxes filled with miscellaneous objects and/or instructions that were produced cheaply and distributed by the loose cadre of artists affiliated with the Fluxus movement. Though the many fluxkits created roughly between 1963 and 1978 vary wildly in form and content, they have in common as a broader project the desire to bring viewers into a state of *flux*, reimagining space, recalibrating the senses, and displacing us from the world of ordered, structured time into the world of *fluxtime*, a time of play, free from the obligations of life as usual.

With *Eastern Daylight Flux Time* (made with Robert Filliou, 1967–77) George Brecht —a Fluxus artist known for his *Event Scores* and a crucial figure in the transition to Conceptualism— embodies the Fluxus interest in alternative versions of marking, and unmarking, time. This piece is an engraved silver pocket watch containing mobile objects such as beads, nails, gears, and a feather instead of the usual clock face. With its lack of numbers and the apparent randomness of the collected objects it contains, Brecht's watch seems to trivialize time, changing it from something that is measured in agreed-upon increments to something that is random or intuitive. While we generally expect a watch to have numbers that are evenly spaced, corresponding to the precisely identical number of minutes in each hour, *Eastern Daylight Flux Time* contains objects that differ in color, texture, and size, and that move around at the will and the motion of the viewer. Brecht alters not only the physical appearance of a watch, but also its sound: instead of a uniform ticking, *Eastern Daylight Flux Time* clamors with the little things inside it as they collide with each other and with the watch's silver body—noises over which the viewer, who may choose to let the watch sit on a table or to shake it vigorously, has some control. This piece captures the essence of fluxtime as a time that wholly departs from the strict ordering of our workaday world, replacing it with a temporality that is quite individual (one may choose to interact with the watch, or with any object in a fluxkit, for a minute or an hour).

Brecht's piece, like many of the fluxkits, reorients our senses, in this case replacing our idea of a watch evenly ticking with one of a watch chaotically clinking. Likewise, James Riddle's *E.S.P. Fluxkit* (1967) also offers a recalibration of the senses, but one that blurs the realms of sight and touch.

This small box, which measures roughly 5 by 4 by 1/2 inches, a typical size for a fluxkit, contains six smooth, matte cards of different colors (one dark blue, one bright red, one yellow, one orange, one subdued green, and one light blue). Also contained in the box is a card with instructions: "Blindfold yourself securely and rub your fingers lightly over the colored papers. With practice you can learn to distinguish between the different colors." This kit, rather than asking the spectator/player to simply tune in to her or his visual and tactile senses, intentionally confuses these senses, asking the interactor to accomplish an act of synesthesia: to actively *feel* color.

Dorothée Brill, in her book *Shock and the Senseless in Dada and Fluxus*, discusses this characteristic of Fluxus art, citing La Monte Young's question, "Isn't it wonderful if someone listens to something he is ordinarily supposed to look at?"[1] Riddle explores the "wonder" of this sensorial melding in his kit, bringing the interactor into a new world in which colors have a tactile quality and our eyes are not necessary for our process of "distinguishing." The cover of the kit echoes these ideas, showing a man whose eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and head are connected with thread, perhaps implying the interconnectedness of our senses in perceptual experience. The importance of sensation in Riddle's piece resonates with what art historian Hannah Higgins argues in her book *Fluxus Experience*: a fluxkit, unlike visual art, is not *about* anything, but rather *is* that thing.[2] Thus, a fluxkit is not *about* sensation, nor is it a representation of sensation, but rather, by activating the viewer's senses directly, it *is* those sensations themselves.

But what do those sensations mean to suggest, and what sort of world do they transport us to? Brill argues that Fluxus relies on two elements: "shock" (as Freud defines it, "an extensive breach being made in the protective shield against stimuli") and "boredom" (or the extended length of perception).[3] These elements are particularly evident in Albert M. Fine's *Piece for Fluxorchestra* (1967), which contains many cards that act as theatrical "scores," instructing the "Fluxperformer" to perform absurd acts on stage, such as: "6. Stand up and shout: 'Silence, for Christ's sake,' then exit." In many of these instructions, the Fluxperformer is told to enact gestures that are intensely sensory but also fairly mundane, or even a bit irritating for both the performer and the audience, such as moving a pocket flashlight back and forth, loudly crunching on potato chips, or inflating and releasing balloons. These sensory experiences may be amplified for the audience because they have already had what Brill describes as a sense of "shock" from the strangeness of the performance, with its alternation between directly bombarding and completely

disregarding the audience. Once they have passed this barrier, they are welcomed into the world of what Brill calls "the senseless having been so shaken that they are now open to stimuli in new ways."[4]

The second element, "boredom," arises when the Fluxperformer goes for long periods of time either doing nothing or merely looking at items in his or her pocket, and reflects the same conception of fluxtime that Brecht's watch explored, one that is leisurely, unstructured, unaware of the hurry and haste of everyday life. Like Brecht, Fine rejects the ordered measuring of logical systems—he numbered the cards, but he skips several numbers for no reason. And, like Riddle, Fine reconfigures our senses, launching us into the Fluxworld.

Carla Liss (a lesser known Fluxus artist, and one of a handful of women who made fluxkits) investigates a similar "sensory awakening" in her *Island Flux Souvenir* (1973), a box containing a shell, a rock, plant fiber, a Greek stamp and coin, and a small plastic box of sand. Liss's box, with its implicit invitation to physically connect with these objects, also relates to Fluxus conceptions of space. For although they are small, self-contained boxes, fluxkits open into a much larger world, one that is expansive and experiential. In the case of Liss's topographical site (somewhere in Greece); we might romanticize about this place based on the trinkets she supplies us, but we cannot access it directly through these mementoes, and do not even know its exact location.

This evocation of a specific but unknown place similarly occurs in *Burglary Fluxkit* (1971) by George Maciunas, who was the central figure of the Fluxus movement and the designer of many of the kits' covers. Maciunas's kit contains an assortment of real but unmarked keys that presumably unlock real doors and locks—but that the owner of the fluxkit will never find. By alluding to doors and locks that the spectator has no hope of locating, the *Burglary Fluxkit* creates a fluid and imaginary space, welcoming the spectator to imagine the place from which these keys came and to find new uses for them in his own world. The fact that this world of the imagination

arises from real objects that once had specific uses forces the spectator to wonder: how did the Fluxus artists produce these kits? As Alison Knowles described in an interview with the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2011 for the exhibition *Thing/Thought: Fluxus Editions, 1962–1978*, she was not supported financially in the production of her kits, and she constructed them herself, often in partnership with her mother, who helped her with the labor-intensive work, such as typing many scrolls by hand.[5] Moreover, Natasha Lushetich, in her book *Fluxus: The Practice of Non-Duality*, explains that, while the fluxkits were designed to sell for between $2 and $10, when all costs are included (such as those of rent, shipping, and arduous labor), the kits cost anywhere "between $40 and $80 to manufacture and distribute," something that falls in harmony with what she regards as one of Maciunas's desires: to overthrow the principles of a classical economy. For this reason, Lushetich deems the effort of the Fluxus artists (and especially Maciunas) as one "of an unconditional, generous, and excessive kind."[6] The kits were subsequently sold cheaply through mail order centers and "Fluxshops," as well as passed among artists and their friends, creating a distribution network more democratic than much of the existing structures in the art world, which focused on unique works displayed exclusively in art institutions.

Higgins writes in her book that fluxkits are "metarealistic triggers," "making reality special as occasions and as objects both in- and outside the aesthetic situations called art."[7] Fluxkits take us out of reality into a Fluxworld in which time, our senses, and our conceptions of space are fluid: time is disregarded, our senses are confused, reconfigured, and made more astute, and space is an imaginary perceptual realm, a stage created for the absurd, or a romantic place we cannot access. In this sense, fluxkits could be considered one of the formative seeds of Conceptual art: they are not limited to 4 by 5 by ½ inch boxes, but rather point out to the much larger realm of "the concept."

Alice Hutchins, *Homage to Ingres (La Baigneuse)*

DANIELLE CARO

Alice Hutchins (1916–2009) was a California-born artist whose work is associated with both the Fluxus and Conceptual art movements. Hutchins studied history and economics at UC Berkeley during the mid-1930s.[1] While at school she met her husband, and the two were quickly off to travel the world, finally settling in Paris thirteen years later. Hutchins was swept into the European avant-garde movement with notable artists, poets, and musicians such as Robert Lapoujade (filmmaker/painter) and George Brecht (composer), and after working several years as a painter, in 1959 shifted her focus to Fluxus and Conceptual art. She began incorporating everyday objects and materials into her pieces, first using postcards, and later magnets and other small objects.[2] In these creations she often confronts questions about the artist's role, viewer participation, and the construction of femininity.

BAMPFA has several of Hutchins's artworks from this period in its permanent collection. One of the most prized is *Homage to Ingres (La Baigneuse),* a Conceptual mail art experiment from 1966. In these early experiments, Hutchins retailored a series of postcards of famous Western artworks purchased from the Louvre gift shop, adding her own Letraset stamps directly onto the small reproductions. The image in Hutchins's *Homage to Ingres* is an iconic nineteenth-century painting titled *La Grande Baigneuse* (also known as *Baigneuse Valpinçon*, 1808) by the French artist Jean-Auguste- Dominique Ingres. In the painting Ingres focused on conveying a sensual and romanticized portrait of a nude woman. The subject is faced away from the viewer as she sits on an unmade bed and looks off to the left half of the composition. She has no recognizable face or identity; we can see only a small glimpse of her facial profile and part of the front of her hair. Her body is voluptuous and her back is elongated—there are unnatural ratios in her anatomy as her bones seem nonexistent in her fleshy and supple appearance. Overall, the painting evokes a dreamlike, feminine quality.

Hutchins sharply contrasts the sexualized and romanticized nude woman—a figure prevalent throughout art history—with a highly ordered and rational black numbered sequence stamped directly on the postcard. The figures are repeated, in balanced and calculated rows separated by dashed lines, down the length of the postcard. As is common with Letraset typeface transfers, some numbers are faded as if incompletely transferred, while others are bold and clear. Although the number pattern is ambiguous, the effect of the contrast between the structured composition of numbers and the fantasy world of the painting remains powerful. By adding her own set of rational symbols on top of the postcard, Hutchins

calls into question the original meaning and symbolization of the familiar image and its relation to the history of art. The screen of repeated numbers makes the Ingres painting unfamiliar, asking the viewer of this work to see it with new, critical eyes.

In Western art history, works become recognizable—and are designated as "masterpieces"—in large part to the extent that they are reproduced by institutions like the Louvre that imprint popular artworks on products to be sold. Proliferating as countless magnets, postcards, and posters, images such as the Ingres painting and Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* have become engraved in contemporary visual culture. In some cases, they have become so commonplace their meanings are no longer examined, but rather taken for granted. By defacing the painting by Ingres—and returning to her origins as a painter, a medium she rejected—Hutchins challenges the credibility of the painted female nude as a fundamental example of "high art."

For centuries male artists have studied and reproduced variations of the same basic model. In *Homage to Ingres*, Hutchins suggests that the repeated female body is akin to a Letraset being stamped on a postcard in a systematic fashion. The repeated numerical figures become a visual metaphor to critique the idealization of the female body within the history of Western art. At the same time as she queries ideas of reproduction, she draws our attention to the shapelessness and oddity of Ingres's nude, and how little it conforms to standard ideas of anatomy.

The original painting by Ingres makes the female form a passive subject of a male onlooker. However, in *Homage to Ingres,* the Letraset stamps that Hutchins uses complicate that dynamic by interrupting the male gaze. There is also humor in Hutchins's repurposed postcard; art historian Kathy O'Dell has noted that the numbers on the postcard "bypass the pitfalls of male language by presenting texts that are not texts, in any decipherable sense."[3] These cryptic symbols renegotiate the pretense of the female body in its objectified form and turn it into something mysteriously coded by a woman artist.
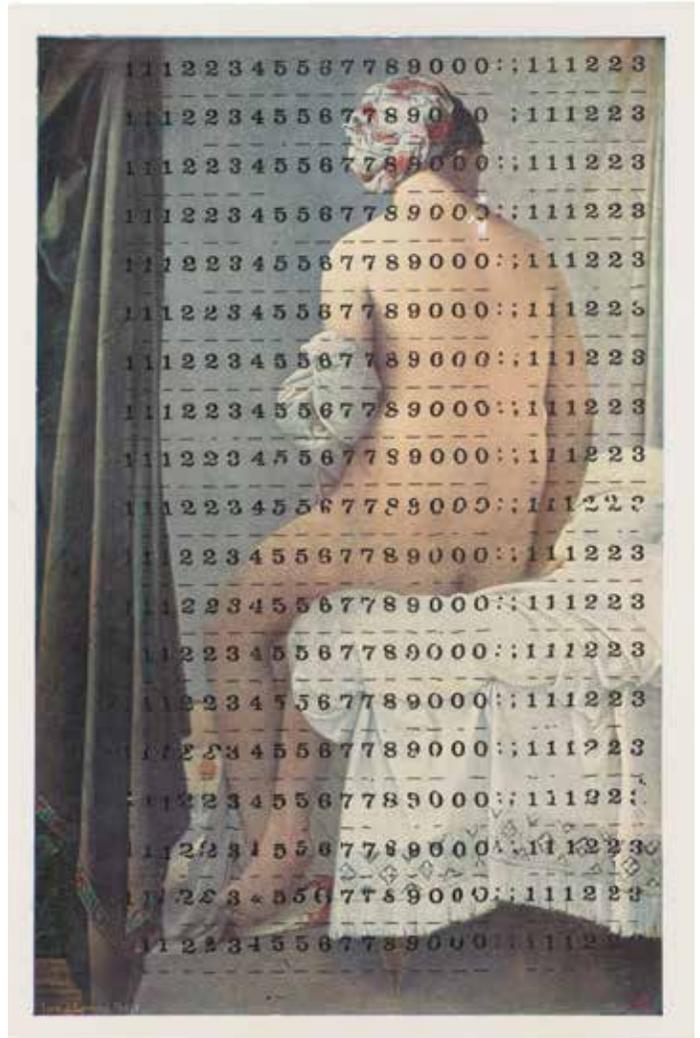
Hutchins was not the first artist to question the meaning of iconic artworks by adding their own sets of symbols to copies of the original paintings. Marcel Duchamp famously altered a reproduction of a masterpiece when he added a humorous drawn mustache on the *Mona Lisa* in 1919. In this piece, entitled "LHOOQ" or "hot piece of ass" when sounded out in French, Duchamp also took on the sacrosanct "masterpiece" in Western art history as well as portrayals of femininity.[4] Surrealist artist Man Ray followed this trend in 1924 by

appropriating another Ingres painting and adding two painted black holes on the female figure's back as if her body were a violin.[5] In *Le Violon d'Ingres* Man Ray questions both the objectification and the appreciation of the female nude figure.

More recent artists have also addressed the widespread reproducibility of "great works"; for instance, in 2015, Claudia Angelmaier had a show at the Guggenheim Museum in which she reimagined postcard copies of masterpieces, including paintings by Ingres. Angelmaier blows these postcards up and fades the image to almost indiscernible levels. Like Hutchins before her, she challenges the male gaze in Western art history as well as the idea of the "original" versus ready-made art.[6]

Homage to Ingres draws on several conceptual themes that other artists in *Mind Over Matter* incorporate in their work as well. Most notably, German artist Hanne Darboven uses systematic gridded numbers as a method for constructing her pieces in a technique similar to the Letraset sequences in *Homage to Ingres.* Though Hutchins did not send her altered postcards through the mail, her use of the postcard as a medium bears a relationship to Conceptual mail art such as Eleanor Antin's *100 Boots* (1971–73), in which the artist took a series of photographs depicting fifty pairs of boots on a long march across the country, printed them as postcards, and mailed them to friends. Instead of initially being presented on gallery walls, this form of art directly addressed a small audience.

Conceptual art focuses less on the product itself, and more on the ideas presented in the work. Hutchins's postcard questions how and why we value certain artworks more than others. Her appropriation of a cheap postcard was meant to decommodify and demystify the realm of "high art." The artist's ability to transform the meaning of commonplace items requires us to look deeper into our culture's widely accepted visual trends and asks us not to accept "masterpieces" at face value.

Alice Hutchins: *Homage to Ingres (La Baigneuse)*, 1966; Letraset on color postcard; 6 × 4 in.; BAMPFA, gift of the artist. Photo: Benjamin Blackwell.

FOOTNOTES

Robert Morris: Sensationalizing Masculinity in the *Labyrinths-Voice-Blind Time* Poster

1 Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," in *Under the Sign of Saturn* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1980). The following quotations are found on pages 99–101.

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5 Kirsty Bell, "Perversely Yours," *Kaleidoscope*, Nov.-Dec. 2009, 58–60.

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4 Peter Wollen, "Mappings: Situations and/or Conceptualists," in *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, ed. Michael Newman and Jon Bird (London: Reaktion, 1999), 40.

5 Wilson, "A Hundred Mile Walk."

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Conceiving Space, Creating Place

1 Peter Wollen, "Mappings: Situationists and/or Conceptualists," in *Rewriting Conceptual Art, ed. by Michael Newman, Jon Bird* (London: Reaktion, 1999), 39.

2 Yoko Ono, Map Piece, quoted in Wollen, "Mappings," 157.

3 Douglas Huebler, quoted in Wollen, "Mappings," 39..

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2 Paul Kos, "Ice Makes Fire," interview by Jarrett Earnest, *The Brooklyn Rail*, April 22, 2012.

3 See Leslie Camhi, "Human Comedy," *Village Voice*, September 30, 2003, and Michael Kimmelman, "Wry Faith That's a Bit Slapstick," *New York Times*, September 12, 2003.

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5 Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: Dutton and Co., 1970), 65.

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### Yoko Ono's *Grapefruit*: Art, Viewer, and the Sound of One Hand Clapping

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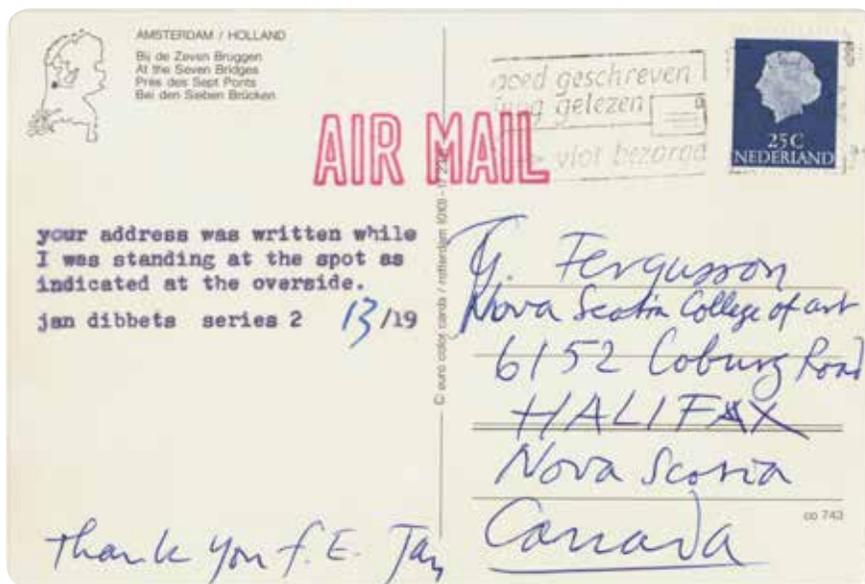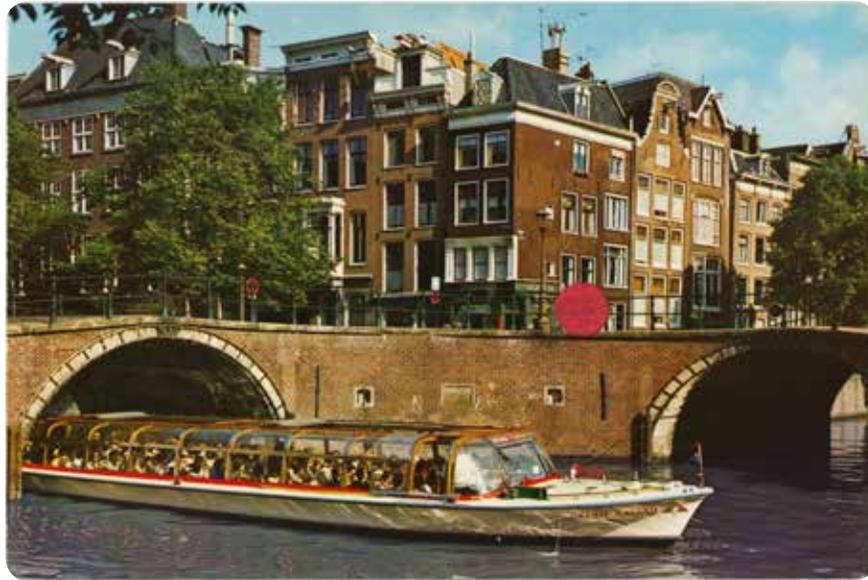
Jan Dibbets: *Your address was written...*, series 2, 1970;
mail art: red sticker, typewritten text, blue ink, and stamp
mark in red ink on color postcard, with postmark and
postage stamp; two-sided; 4 × 6 in.; BAMPFA, purchase
made possible through a bequest from Phoebe Apperson
Hearst, by exchange, a partial gift of the Steven Leiber Trust,
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Marcia Simon Weisman Foundation Fund and the Friends and
Trustees Acquisitions Endowment Fund.

BACK COVER Bruce Nauman: *Sugar/Ragus*, 1973; offset
lithography and screen print on paper; 27 ¾ × 28 in.; BAMPFA,
purchase made possible through a bequest from Phoebe
Apperson Hearst, by exchange, a partial gift of the Steven
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