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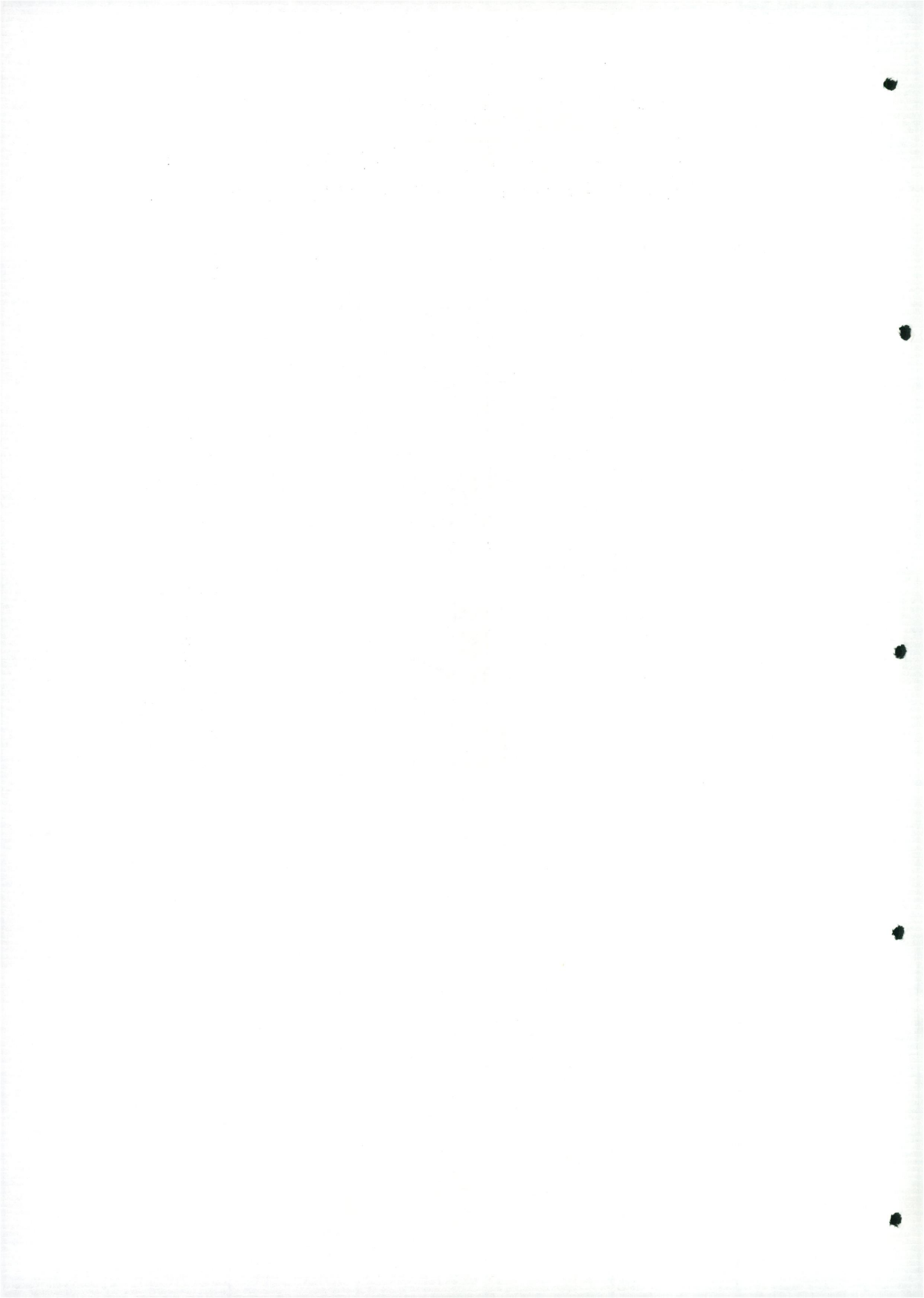
**National College of Art & Design;
Fine Art Print**

Yoko Ono:-

Fluxus in Praxis

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Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and
Design and Complementary Studies in candidacy for
the B A in Fine Art Print - 1996



List of Illustrations

Fig 1a	1963 Fluxus Manifesto	page 8
Fig 1b	1965 Fluxmanifesto on Fluxamusement	page 8
Fig 2	Suicide Kit - Ben Valtier	page 10
Fig 3	Sound Chess - Takako Saito	page 10
Fig 4	Bag Piece - Yoko Ono	page 12
Fig 5	Score & Poster "A Grapefruit in the world of Park"	page 15
Fig 6	Cut Piece - Photograph from performance and score	page 17
Fig 7	Painting for the Wind - Yoko Ono	page 19
Fig 8	Work to be stepped on - Yoko Ono	page 21
Fig 9	Nail it - Yoko Ono	page 21
Fig 10	Mend - Yoko Ono	page 21
Fig 11a	Sky Dispenser - Yoko Ono	page 24
Fig 11b	Air Dispenser - Yoko Ono	page 24
Fig 12	Play it by trust - Yoko Ono	page 25
Fig 13	Box of smile - Yoko Ono	page 26
Fig 14	Photograph of installation in Half a Wind Show	page 27
Fig 15	Forget it - Yoko Ono	page 29
Fig 16	Questionnaire for Film No 4	page 32
Fig 17	Stills from "Fly"	page 36
Fig 18	Stills from "Rape"	page 37
Fig 19	"WAR IS OVER" - Ono & Lennon	page 40
Fig 20	Clean it - Yoko Ono	page 46
Fig 21	Keys - Yoko Ono	page 48
Fig 22	Artforum Advertisement - Jeff Koons	page 49



Introduction

born: Bird Year

early childhood: collected skys

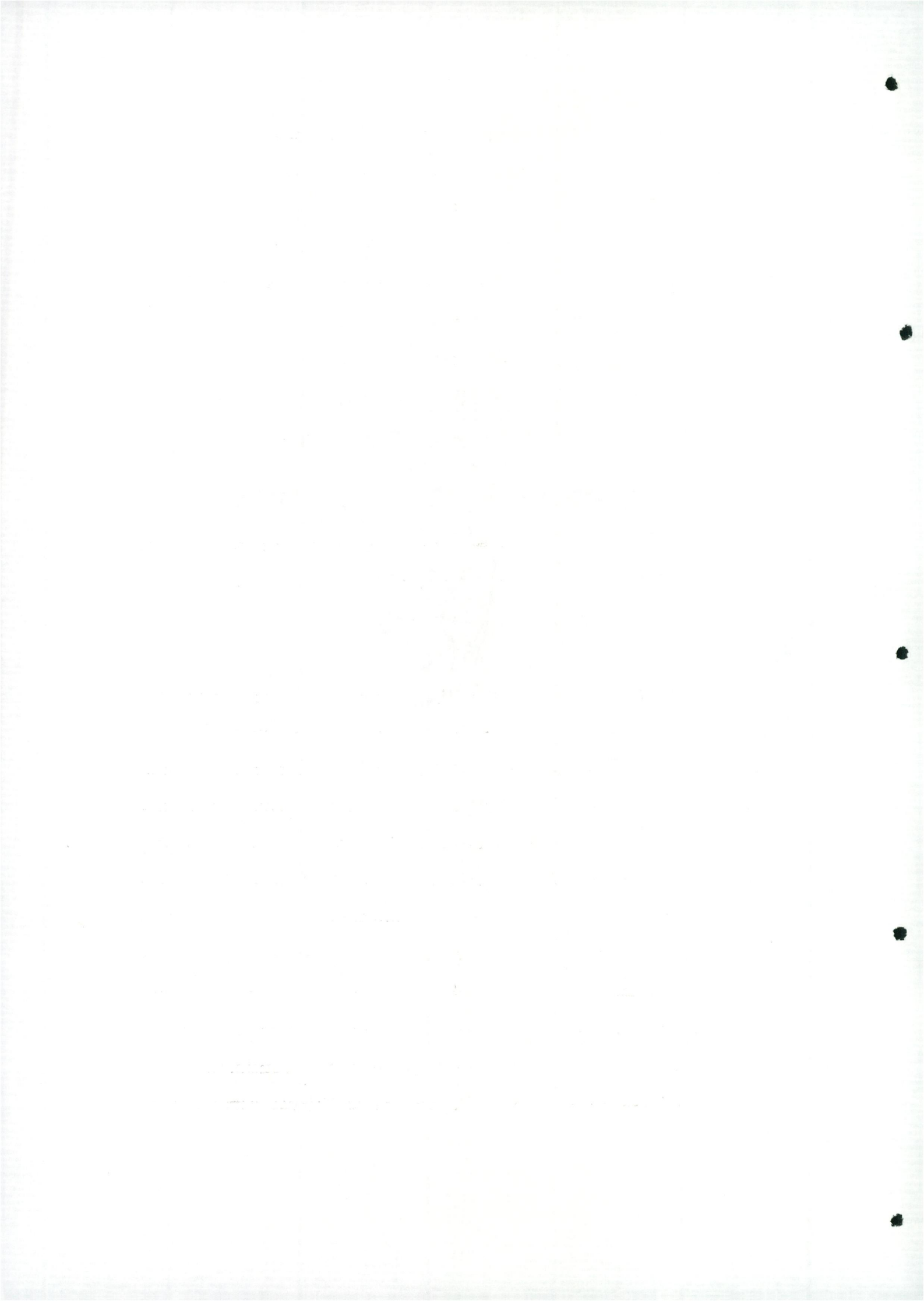
adolescence: collected seaweeds

late adolescence: gave birth to a
grapefruit, collected snails,
clouds, garbage cans etc.

Have graduated many schools
specializing in these subjects

(Ono, Grapefruit)

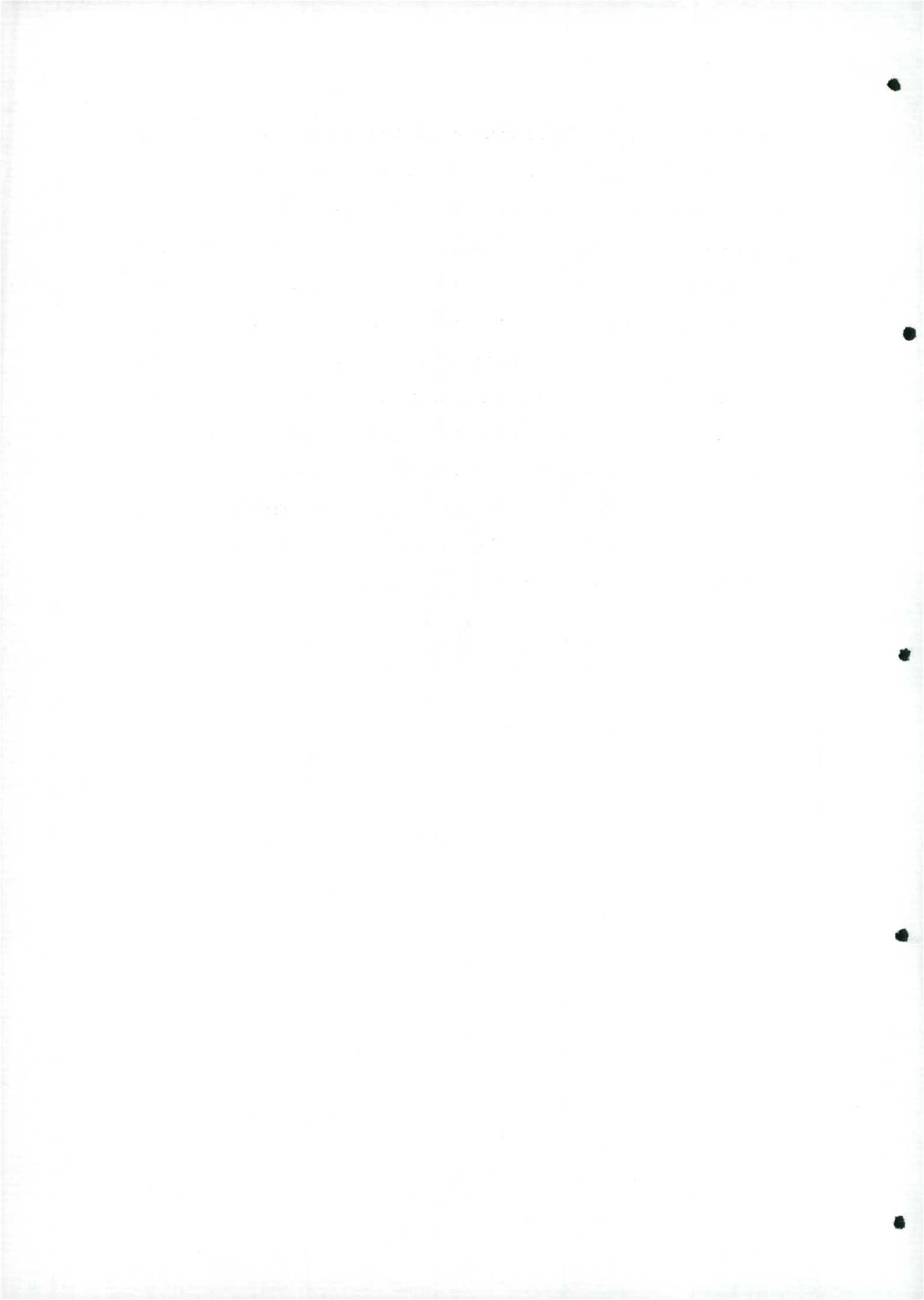
During the late 1950's and 1960's, art began to assume and increasingly ideological and critical tone. Fluxus was one of the art movements that came into existence during this period. Fluxus was a radical collective of international artists that flourished in the 1960's and 1970's. Fluxus was founded by a Lithuanian-born American called George Macinuas; and the movement was heavily inspired by the Zen-inspired composer John Cage. Fluxus was an underground anti-art movement, a rearguard action which fought against the museum and gallery system, the art object and the cult of the personality of the artist; flying in the face of the debilitating convictions and social restrictions of the 1950's and 1960's. Fluxus valued poor materials, ephemerality, mass production and anonymity. What set Fluxus apart from other similar movements at the time was that Fluxus was self-named, (it was not christened by the art critics) and through Maciunas's continuous publishing and Fluxus distribution it managed to continue for nearly 17 years.



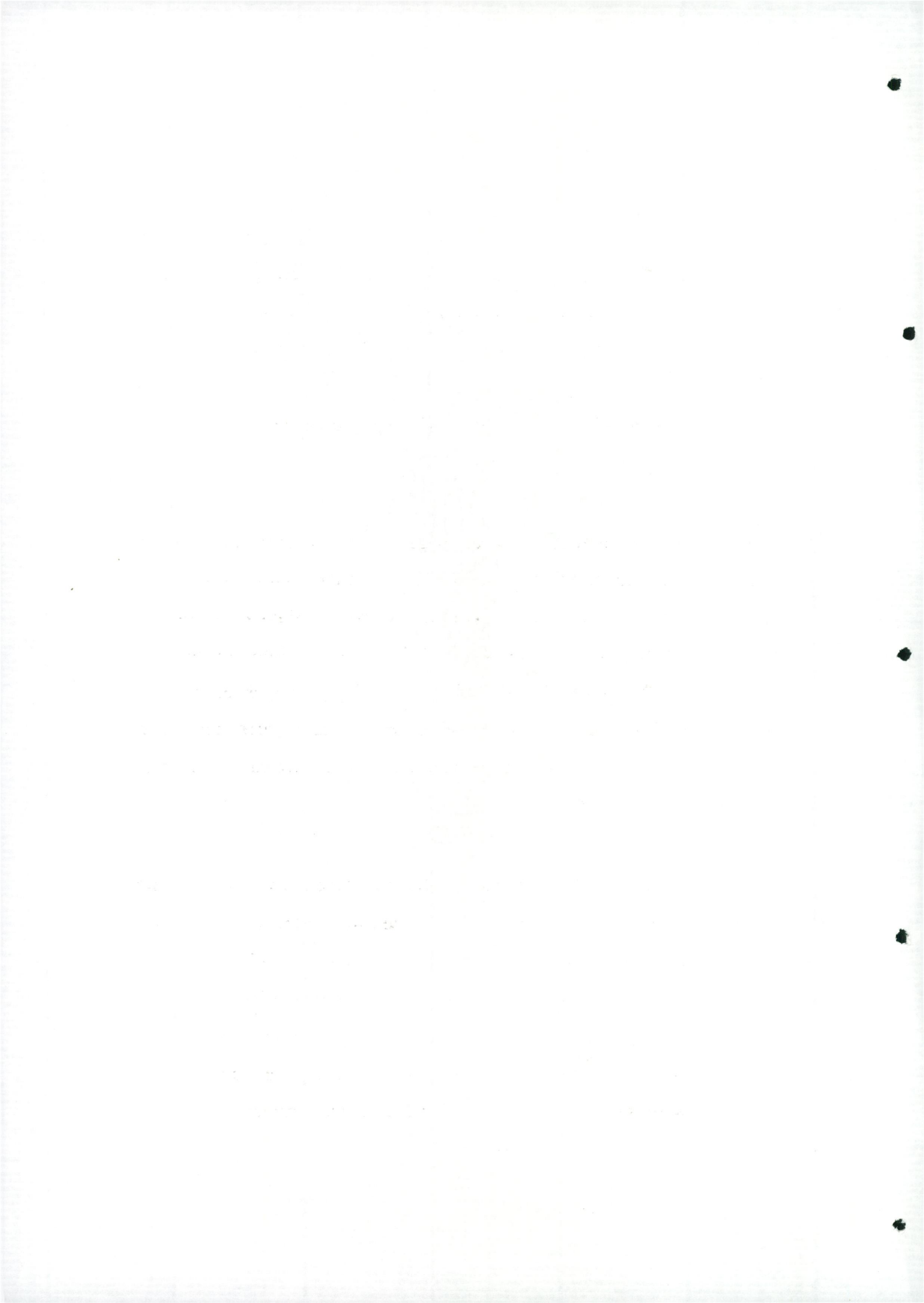
The works produced by Fluxus included film, music, actions and dance, and the criteria was that the work should be of a non-intellectual nature. Because of the subversive stance adopted by Fluxus, some of the work produced seems to be only one above fatuous boyish pranks. The work produced by the female members of Fluxus however seems to follow a different agenda. These works feature some very strong feminist elements and the approach is more complex and ideas are over-layered and implied. Their concerns are of a deeper social involvement, dealing with ideas, emotions and the self.

Her marriage to John Lennon simultaneously diminished her previous artistic achievements and gave her subsequent fame as the woman who broke up the Beatles.

“The world of post-Dada, post-Cage, avant garde experimentation in the 1960’s was a determinedly fluid one, questioning the very notions of ‘standards’ and ‘expertise’.(Peebles 1981 p 57) In this thesis, I have chosen to concentrate on the work of Yoko Ono. She was very active with Fluxus in the 1960’s and her work probably embodies most of the Fluxus ideals. Yoko Ono was also a key figure in two of the most significant developments in the art of the 1960’s. One is the shattering of the frame - the explosion of the traditional western notion of the work of art as a unique representational object. The second is the globalization of the avant garde and its transformation by the cross fertilization with a variety of non-western aesthetic and philosophical perspectives.



In my first chapter, I will discuss the Fluxus movement and Yoko Ono's involvement with Fluxus; focusing on the compatibility of the Fluxus aims and ideals with Yoko Ono's background and approach to her own work. In chapter 2, I will focus on Yoko Ono's 1960's interdisciplinary work - performance, objects and poetry, and film; discussing here the approach and subsequent development. Chapter 3 includes her 1970's work. This is the collaborative work done with John Lennon in both film and music, and situating this work with underground cinema of the late 1960's and early 1970's. Chapter 4 is a discussion of her bronze age show in which Yoko Ono recast some of her 1960's pieces in bronze. These castings will be compared with Koons in terms of their own philosophies.



Chapter 1

Praxis refers to acts, courses of action and interaction or the exercise of practicing. Praxis also implies the therapeutic practice aimed at the recovery of something. Fluxus works, especially performance were both individual works of art and the actions of a human body in a specific space and time. These actions reflect the metaphysics of the dynamics of social exchange and human action from personal to political.

The Fluxus movement brought together a number of diverse talents in an inspired proliferation of events, publications and other activities under an elusive sensibility. Fluxus became a radical collective of arts in the 1960's evolving into an anti-art movement. Fluxus can be viewed also as the precursor of concept art and performance art, pre-empting these 'new' artforms in a decade that sought social change and allowed an art to reflect this heightened awareness.

Fluxus was 'founded' in 1961 by George Maciunas. As an art movement, it was idealistic, anarchistic, international, and influential. The movement sought to distance itself from the elitist abstract expressionists and the over-formalising by art critics. Fluxus quickly set itself apart from it's contemporaries through its rear-guard actions and Maciunas's continuous publications of manifestos, aims and criteria, and posters. One aim



was to reflect the spirit of the late 1950's and early 1960's of a culture in a state of 'flux'.

As an art movement, Fluxus sought to totally separate itself from all aesthetic categories of the past, fighting against the museum and gallery system, the primacy of the art object and the personality cult of the artist. Fluxus manifestos promoted the ideals of safeguarding art and life without overwhelming both, seeking to neutralise the arrogance of art and the vulgarity of life by the means of constructing a formal order that would describe this new sensibility.

Fluxus detailed its aims and criteria through its manifestos (fig 1a & 1b) and publications. There were nine criteria detailed for Fluxus enterprises and these were, internationalism, experimentalism, iconoclasm intermedia, resolution of art life dichotomy, implicativeness, play or gags, ephemerality and specificity.

Much of the importance of Fluxus lies in its connections with the art of its time, both as an influence and as concurrent expression. Works produced by Fluxus artists range from the sublime to the ridiculous, these works included objects, poems, film, performance/events, with spoofs on the more serious conceptual art and uninhibited bathroom humour. Objects produced were cheap and badly (and easily) made, in their attempt to change the consumption of art (ie purchasing and distribution of 'multiples' as

Manifesto:

2. To affect, or bring to a certain state, by subjecting to, or treating with, a flux. "Fluxed into another world." South.
 3. Med. To cause a discharge from, as in purging.
 flux (flŭks) n. [OF., fr. L. fluxus, fr. fluere, fluxum, to flow. See FLUENT; cf. FLUSH, n. (of cards).] 1. Med. a A flowing or fluid discharge from the bowels or other part; esp., an excessive and morbid discharge: as, the bloody flux, or dysentery. b The matter thus discharged.

PURGE the world of bourgeois sickness, "intellectual", professional & commercialized culture, PURGE the world of dead art, imitation, artificial art, abstract art, illusionistic art, mathematical art, — PURGE THE WORLD OF "EUROPANISM"!

2. Act of flowing: a continuous moving on or passing by, as of a flowing stream; a continuing succession of changes.
 3. A stream; copious flow; flood; outflow.
 4. The setting in of the tide toward the shore. Cf. REFLUX.
 5. State of being liquid through heat; fusion. Rare.

PROMOTE A REVOLUTIONARY FLOOD AND TIDE IN ART, Promote living art, anti-art, promote NON ART REALITY to be fully grasped by all peoples, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals.

7. Chem. & Metal. a Any substance or mixture used to promote fusion, esp. the fusion of metals or minerals. (Common metallurgical fluxes are silica and silicates (acidic), lime and limestone (basic), and fluorite (neutral). b Any substance applied to surfaces to be joined by soldering or welding, just prior to or during the operation, to clean and free them from oxide, thus promoting their union, as rosin.

FUSE the cadres of cultural, social & political revolutionaries into united front & action.

sonderdruck fluxus 2-3/1963 maciunas manifest

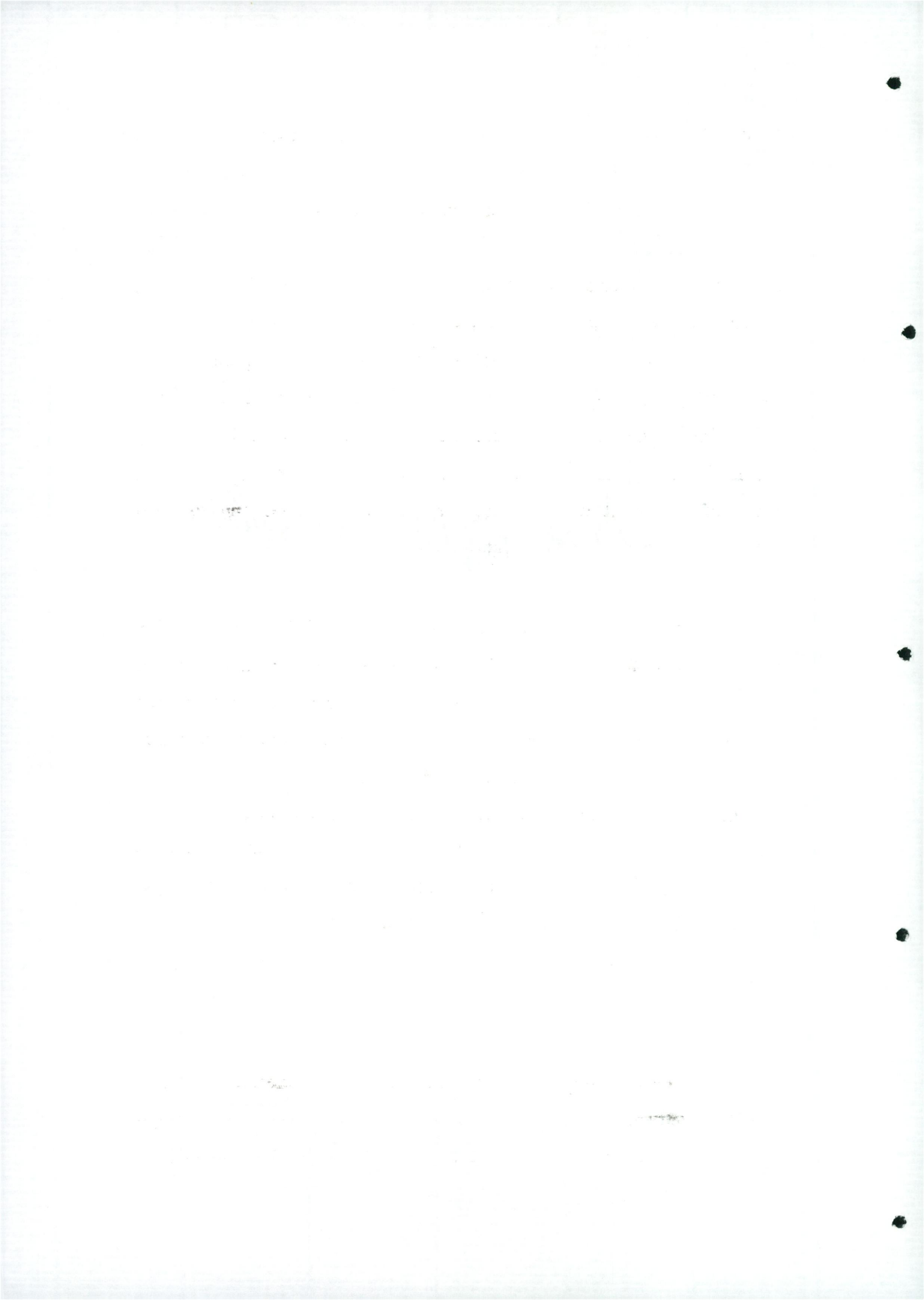
Fig 1a - 1963 Fluxus Manifesto

FLUXMANIFESTO ON FLUXAMUSEMENT - VAUDEVILLE - ART? TO ESTABLISH ARTIST'S NONPROFESSIONAL, NONPARASITIC, NONELITE STATUS IN SOCIETY, HE MUST DEMONSTRATE OWN DISPENSABILITY, HE MUST DEMONSTRATE SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF THE AUDIENCE, HE MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT ANYTHING CAN SUBSTITUTE ART AND ANYONE CAN DO IT. THEREFORE THIS SUBSTITUTE ART-AMUSEMENT MUST BE SIMPLE, AMUSING, CONCERNED WITH INSIGNIFICANCES, HAVE NO COMMODITY OR INSTITUTIONAL VALUE. IT MUST BE UNLIMITED, OBTAINABLE BY ALL AND EVENTUALLY PRODUCED BY ALL. THE ARTIST DOING ART MEANWHILE, TO JUSTIFY HIS INCOME, MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT ONLY HE CAN DO ART. ART THEREFORE MUST APPEAR TO BE COMPLEX, INTELLECTUAL, EXCLUSIVE, INDISPENSABLE, INSPIRED, TO RAISE ITS COMMODITY VALUE IT IS MADE TO BE RARE, LIMITED IN QUANTITY AND THEREFORE ACCESSIBLE NOT TO THE MASSES BUT TO THE SOCIAL ELITE.



George Maciunas. Fluxmanifesto on Fluxamusement. 1965. Detail

Fig 1b - "Fluxmanifesto on Fluxamusement" George Maciunas 1965 detail



in the Fluxkit). The objective of this also was to focus the viewers attention on the idea, not the object. Pieces produced include Ay-O's 'Finger Boxes' containing variable contents, Ben Vautier's 'Fluxus Suicide Kit' and Takako Saito's 'Sound Chess' - illustrated in fig 2 & 3. In performance, Fluxus elevated the body - it's thoughts, experiences, perceptions, processes, and actions, - to the centre of aesthetic concern and destabilizing the 'art-objects'. Fluxus events were different from the happenings of the late 1950's. While happenings contained more complex expressionistic and painterly elements, a Fluxus event was more similar to a one-liner. The focus of the event was to disrupt normal expectations and to open the mind to whatever it might embrace.

Fluxus was heavily influenced by the composer, John Cage and his appropriation to chance and everyday sound for his musical material, initiating a new mode of performance art which favoured single actions and 'insignificant' quotidian phenomena. Cage's classes opened music and ambient sound to chance phenomena and "provided a primary model for the merging of art and real life towards which so many of the artists of this period aspired" (Altshuler, 1989 p 66) and in this focusing of mental attention on which the success of his pieces depended, he reorientated art to the viewer as full participant in the creation of the work.

Yoko Ono entered this aesthetic vanguard through music. She had studied poetry and music at Sarah Lawrence College, and through her marriage in 1956 to Toshi Ichiyanagi, a modernist composer,

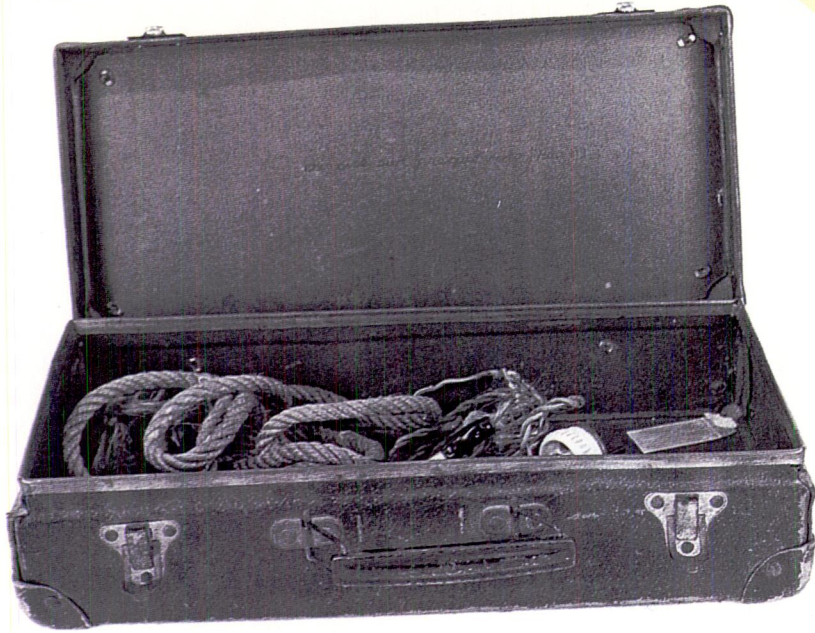
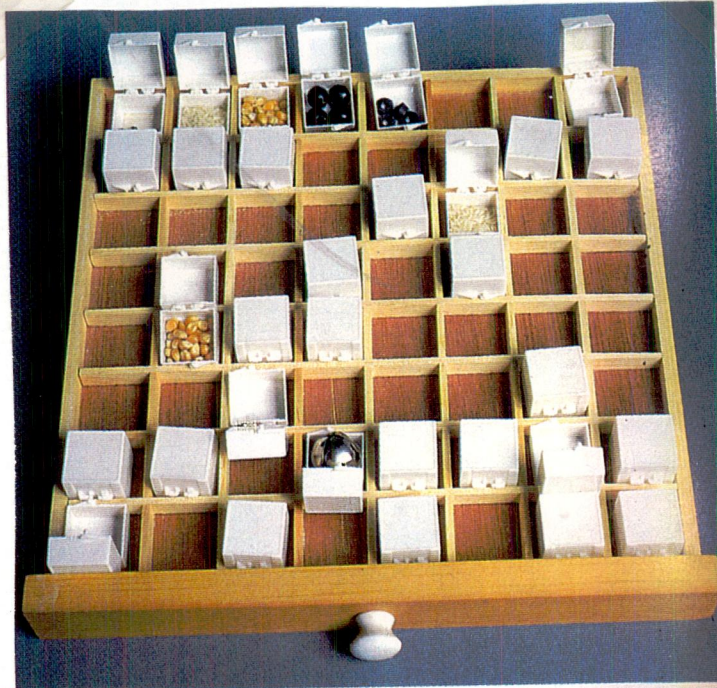


Fig 2 - "Suicide Kit" Ben Vaultier



Takako Saito. SOUND CHESS and WEIGHT CHESS contained in a drawer of FLUX CABINET

Fig 3 - "Sound Chess" Takako Saito



she met John Cage and Merce Cunningham. She also attended Cage's New School Classes for Social Research along with many artists who later would become involved with Fluxus. From her apartment in Chambers Street she hosted early Fluxus concerts for La Monte Young, Jackson Mac Low, George Maciunas, and Yvonne Rainer amongst others.

This open relationship to art as well as the nine criteria of Fluxus was very sympathetic to Yoko Ono's background and to the work she produced. She was 'international' in that she was Japanese and spent some of her childhood in America, and her religious background was both christian and buddist. Her work moved freely between media and pre-Fluxus pieces began the formulation of actions such as Bag Piece (fig 4), Match Piece, and Breath Piece. These pieces were created out of a necessity pertaining to emotions and events in her personal life. "Whenever I wrote a poem, they said it was too long, it was like a short story and a short story was like a poem. I felt like a misfit in every medium" (COTT & DOUDNA, 1984, p 68). In 1966, in her letter To the Wesleyan People, she wrote "but then I thought there might be some people who needed something more than painting, poetry and music, something I called an 'additional act' that you need in life it (was) all the more reason to create a sensory experience isolated from other sensory experiences, which is something rare in daily life. Art is not merely a duplication of life, to assimilate art in life, is different from art duplicating life' (ACHILLE, 1990 p 239).



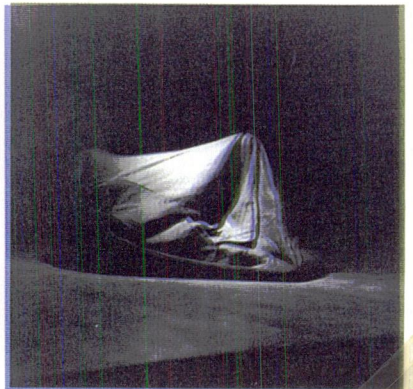
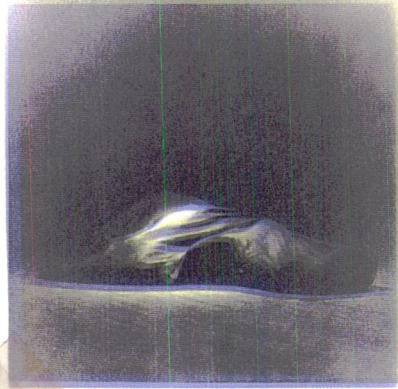


Fig 4 - "Bag Piece" Yoko Ono

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“Fluxus can be lots of fun when the boys let you on their boat sometimes they throw you off the boat you have to be NEAT” - Carole Scheeman. Yoko Ono once commented that Fluxus found some of her pieces to be “too animalistic”, and by comparison the female members of Fluxus appear to have been on a different agenda. Performances and objects produced by them are of a political nature, questioning race, gender, sexuality in a personal provocative way. The issues they chose to deal with emerged out of their own direct personal and social experiences as they did from the wider arena of early feminism and the civil rights movement.

Yoko Ono asserts an art that is made out of need, responding to the necessities of a life lived personally and politically at the same time. In this, desire and inspiration act as one; the process is neither linear nor hierarchical but indivisible and organic, wish and act, object and effect, all are one and the same. It is her belief that anyone can be an artist, that a frame of mind rather than genius is the mark of creativity.

According to the critic, Alexander Munroe, “it was Yoko Ono who first announced that language, by itself on a gallery wall, is a justifiable for art. Relying on chance, mutability, and audience participation, Ono’s instructions for Paintings mark the quintessential Fluxus and conceptual notion of art as a situation to be perceived by the mind” ([Yoko Ono] Weatherhill.com).



Chapter 2

(i) Performance

The Fluxus event was relatively simple and generally was constituted by a single occurrence. In common with other Fluxus events, Ono's performances jettisoned conventional aesthetics in order to jolt viewers out of a self-satisfied assumption about art, her incorporation of matter of fact, task oriented activities also paralleled the reliance on the common-place gestures that had overtaken the vanguard dance community. Much of Yoko Ono's work presents an alternative view of life, viewing things from ever-altering perspectives, and focusing the work on a multi-sensual level.

"A Grapefruit in the World of Park", (score and poster illustrated in fig 4) premiered her first public concert at the Village Gate New York, in 1961. The performance consisted of a taped background of mumbled words and wild laughter, musicians playing atonal music and a performer intoning unemotionally about peeling a grapefruit, squeezing lemons, and counting the hairs on a dead child. All of this was presented on a dimly lit stage. The piece presented in near-darkness containing over-amplified strange 'noises' transmits a child-like fear of dark and unknown noises.

Also in this program was Ono's "A Piece for Strawberries and Violins", in which performer Yvonne Rainer stood up and then sat down before a table stacked with dishes. At the end of ten

WHERE IS THIS
THIS IS THE PARK
I CAN SMELL METAL IN THE AIR
NO ITS THE CLOVERS
ARE THEY BLEEDING
NO ITS THE SUNSET
IS THIS THE ROOM
NO ITS THE SUNSET
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEAK TO THE DEAD
OH NO
I ONLY CAME HERE TO PEEL GRAPEFRUIT
IS IT TOO COLD
ITS TOO WARM
THE SKYS TOO HIGH
PEOPLE TUGTING UP THEIR STOMACHS CONTENTELY TO THE SKY
YOUR VOICE SOUNDS USUALLY SMALL IN THE AFTERNOON AIR
YOUR KINGS FLY AWAY BETWEEN THE CLOUDS AND THE GROPPING
DEN ON YOUR CHEEKS IS LIKE THE KISSES OF YOUR LOVERS
DRINK PEPSI! COLA YOU'LL LIKE IT IT LIXES YOU
DON'T PEEL IT
EVERYTHING SEEMS SO RIGHT IN THE PARK - YES DOESN'T IT
EVEN THE GRAPEFRUIT OH NO NOT THE GRAPEFRUIT YES EVEN THE
GRAPEFRUIT... WHY DON'T YOU THROW IT AWAY ITS WRINKLED
ITS WRINKLED

2
LETS COUNT THE HAIRS OF THE DEAD CHILD
LETS COUNT THE HAIRS OF THE DEAD CHILD
DO YOU LIKE CLATS
I LIKE CLATS ONLY ITS HARD TO PEEL THEM THOUGH
PEEL CLATS
OH YES YOU DO
ITS GOOD FOR YOU THEY SAY
I DON'T KNOW THAT
I MUST TRY THAT SOMETIMES
HOW DONT HURT YOUR FINGERS
NO I HATE IT

THEY LOOK SO JUICY
HOW LETS TRY
HOW IS IT
HELL I PREFER METEORICAL TO CLATS AT LEAST ITS SOMETHING
DIFFERENT
DINERS READY
DID YOU HEAR THAT
HAVE TO ASK ME
SOMETIMES ITS TOO MUCH LIGHT IT
LETS JUST TOO MUCH FOR ME
LETS COUNT THE HAIRS OF THE DEAD CHILD
LETS COUNT THE HAIRS OF THE DEAD CHILD
3

3
I HAVE TO SQUEEZE LETS
YES
WE JUST LIVE
WE JUST DO SOMETHING
SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE I GUESS
LETS NOT LEAVE THE ROOM LETS STAY LETS LIVE LONGER
SO WE CAN DRINK TEA TOGETHER
THAT'D BE NICE
BUT THATS A DREAM
6' 2' 21
JO JO IS THAT YOUR TIE FLY IN THE SKY
OH JO ITS THE LOCK ISS'T IT
BUT LOCKS DON'T FLY UP INTO THE SKY
WHY'S JO
OH I'VE NEVER MET HIM BUT I KNOW THAT HE HAS LONG FINGERS
LONG HAIRS TOO NO JUST LONG FINGERS
AND HE CAN SQUEEZE LETS BE VERY NELL
I HEARD HIS VOICE ONCE LIKE FRAGMENTS OF BROKER HORROR
ITS SAID THAT HE CANT KEEP VOICES LIKE HE KEEP PUSHROOPS
ONE
ITS GETTING DARK
THE FLOWERS ARE STILL WHITE THROUGH
ARE THEY WASTE PAPERS

4
IS THIS THE PARK
CAN YOU OPEN THE WINDOW
CAN YOU OPEN THE WINDOW
ITS LOCKED
LOOK THE CLOUD IS MOVING
IT WAS BETWEEN THOSE TREES BEFORE SEE
ARE YOU BLEEDING
ONE DAY HIS BONES TOUCHED MINE
I WAS HAPPY
YOU LIKE BONES YES THEY MAKE YOU FEEL COFFORTABLE I GUESS
WIPE YOUR FINGERS ON THE GRASS ITS STICKY
THE LOLLIPOPS ARE GETTING SOFT
DO YOU LIKE MY BABY CARRIAGE?
OH ITS SIFPLY WONDERFUL
THE CURVE THE SHINY WHEELS
EVERYTHING IS JUST RIGHT
IS IT EMPTY
I SHAINE IT EVERY DAY WITH VINEGAR AND TAKE OF THE SPELL WITH
PERFUMES
DID YOU KNOW I HAD TO GET THIS FOOD FOR \$10 NOW CAN YOU
GIVE \$10 FOR THIS PONY... I WANTED TO MAKE IT RICER YOU KNOW
NOT GRAPEFRUITS OR CLATS ANYWAY... WHAT CAN YOU DO... HELL IT
MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD TO DO SOMETHING FOR OTHERS YOU KNOW... I AM
NOT COPPLAINING OF BEING IN CHARGE OF THESE THINGS.

5
ARE YOU LISTENING
YOU LOOK SO PALE I GUESS ITS THIS LIGHT
ARE YOU DEAD
18
18
ITS CLOSING
ITS CLOSING
ARE YOU BLEEDING
LETS GO
LETS HOT 69

IS IT TOO WRINKLED
STOP PEELING
PEASE PORRIDGE HOT
PEASE PORRIDGE COLD
PEASE PORRIDGE IN THE PARK
NINE DAYS OLD
BETSY STOP THAT WERE GOING NOW
SOME LIKE IT HOT
SOME LIKE IT COLD
OH YES YES I MUST REMEMBER THAT
IT IS SO HARD TO KEEP TRACK OF THINGS YOU KNOW
THEY ALL GO
ARE HE GOING RUMBY
YOUR COLLAR IS PERSPIRING YOU'LL CATCH COLD PUSSEY
6

6
WHY DON'T YOU PUT ON YOUR SWEATER
I'M HOT RUMBY CAN I HAVE SOMETHING TO DRINK
THEY'RE ALL GONE RONEY
HOW PUT ON YOUR JACKET TOO ITS GETTING CHILLY
CLOSING
3
I'M TIRED
IS THE PARK GORE
DID IT GET TIRED OF US
THE GRAPEFRUIT IS STILL SHINING ON THE TABLE
THE SEEDS AND THE PIECES OF HARD SKIN
IS THAT YOUR HAIR LYING ON THE FLOOR OR IS THAT THE GRASS
ITS MET ISS'T IT
DOES IT EVER DRY
THE ROOM IS FILLED WITH LIGHT
NO OTHER ROOM IS FULL OF HAIRS
THE WIND HAS STOLEN ITV HEY
CAN HE EVER GET OUT
WHERE'S MY LEVINADE
ARE YOU DEAD
OH NO THANK YOU
I ONLY CAME HERE TO PEEL YOU
JO
JO

Norman Seaman presents works by

YOKO ONO

A GRAPEFRUIT IN THE WORLD OF PARK
A PIECE FOR STRAWBERRIES AND VIOLIN
AOS — TO TUDOR
ELECTRONIC TECH ASSISTANT
RICHARD MAXFIELD
LIGHTING TECHNICAL ASSISTANT
DONALD KELLY

NOV. 24th FRI. 6 PM
CARNEGIE RECITAL HALL
154 WEST 57 ST.
TICKETS \$2.50 AT CARNEGIE BOX OFFICE

GEORGE MACIUNAS

Fig 5 - "A Grapefruit in the World of Park" - Score and Poster

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Main body of faint, illegible text, appearing to be several paragraphs of a document.

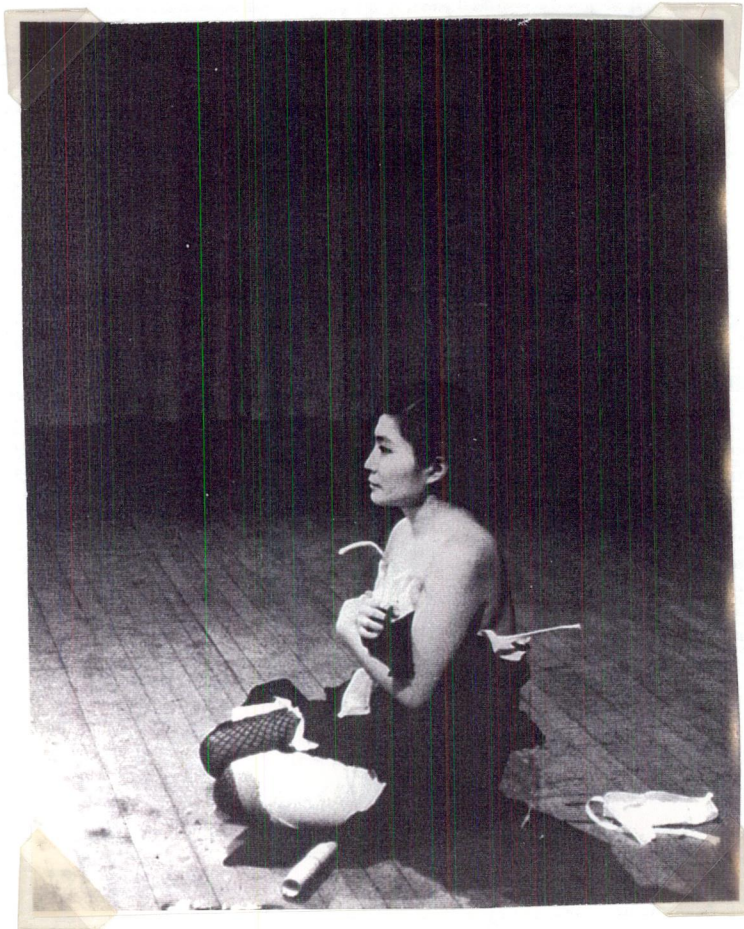
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minutes, she smashed the dishes. This action is accompanied by a rhythmic background of repeated syllables, a tape recording of moans and words spoken backwards and an 'aria' of high pitched wails sung by Yoko Ono. In this she confronts the subject as the subject confronts the viewer; raw, naked and vulnerable.

Other pieces drew more directly on Cage's theories of chance, audience involvement and designated duration. In one piece, Ono amplified the sounds being made in the lavatory of the concert hall; in another she placed a clock on the centre of the stage and asked the audience to wait until the alarm went off. Ono's intention differed from Cage's (as in the latter piece), her goal was to direct the audience's attention inward so as to highlight the stillness of the self. This focus resembles a type of Zen meditative practice more than it did in Cage's work of transferring the burden of 'music making' back to the audience.

Another characteristic of Ono's performance work was the aura of discomfort that derives from her subversive attacks on conventional notions of morality. In "Wall Piece For Orchestra" (1962), she knelt on the stage and repeatedly hit her head against the floor, raises questions about personal violation and violence. "Cut Piece" (1964), also deals with violations, and displays her courage to put her own body on the line. Score and still of a performance of this are illustrated in fig 6. In this she sits motionless on the stage after inviting the audience to come up and cut away her clothing. The piece interlaces themes of passivity, aggression, self denigration and victimisation. "Cut Piece visualizes

and enacts the responsibility that viewers must take in an aesthetic experience" (Jenkins, 1993, p 81). Yoko Ono wrote of this piece in "Grapefruit" - "People went on cutting the parts they do not like of me finally there was only the stone remained of me that was in me but they were still not satisfied and wanted to know what it's like in the stone" (Ono, 1966).

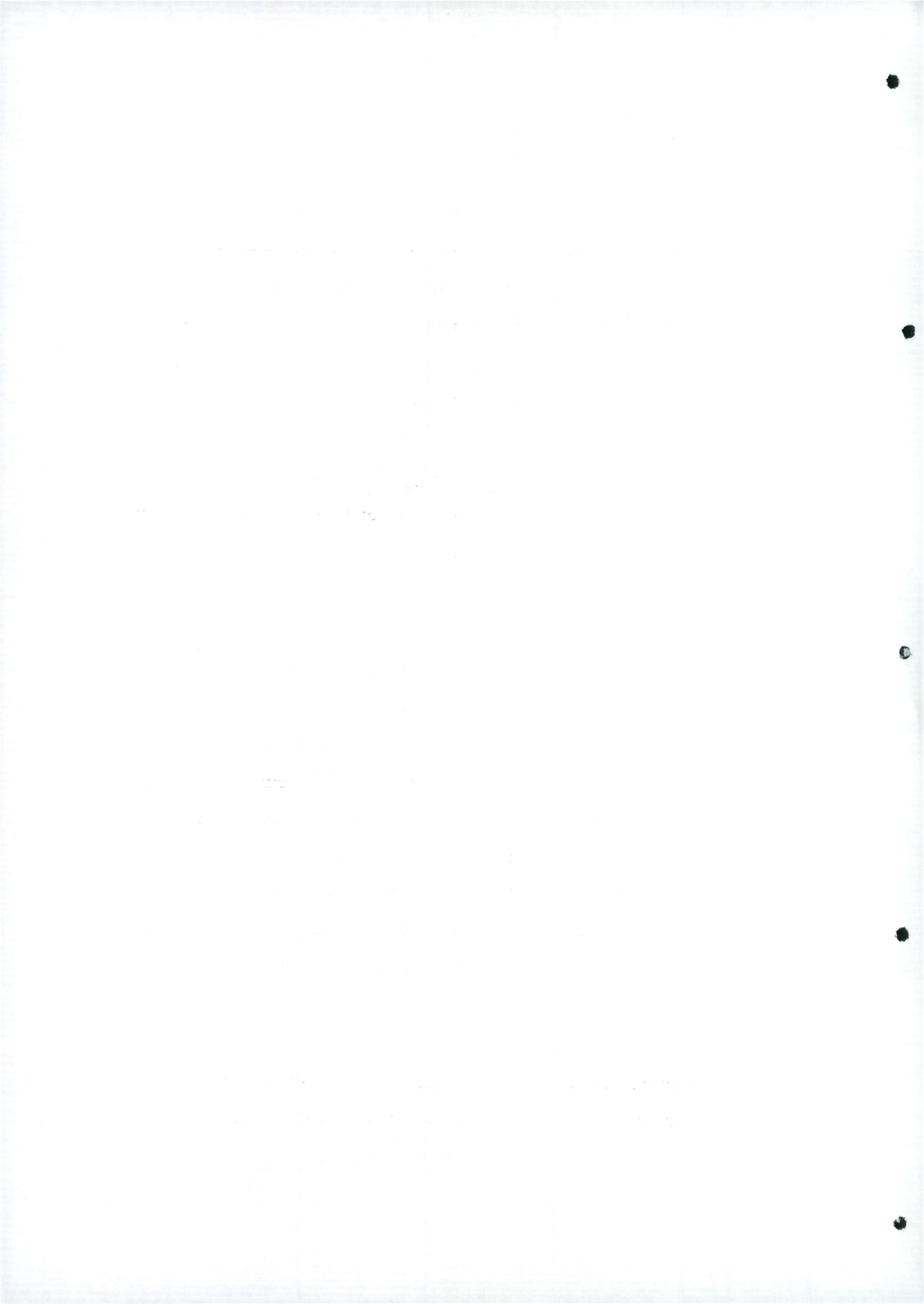


CUT PIECE

Cut.

This piece was performed in Kyoto, Tokyo, New York and London. It is usually performed by Yoko Ono coming on the stage and in a sitting position, placing a pair of scissors in front of her and asking the audience to come up on the stage, one by one, and cut a portion of her clothing (anywhere they like) and take it. The performer, however, does not have to be a woman.

Fig 6 - "Cut Piece" Photograph and Score



(ii) Objects and Poetry

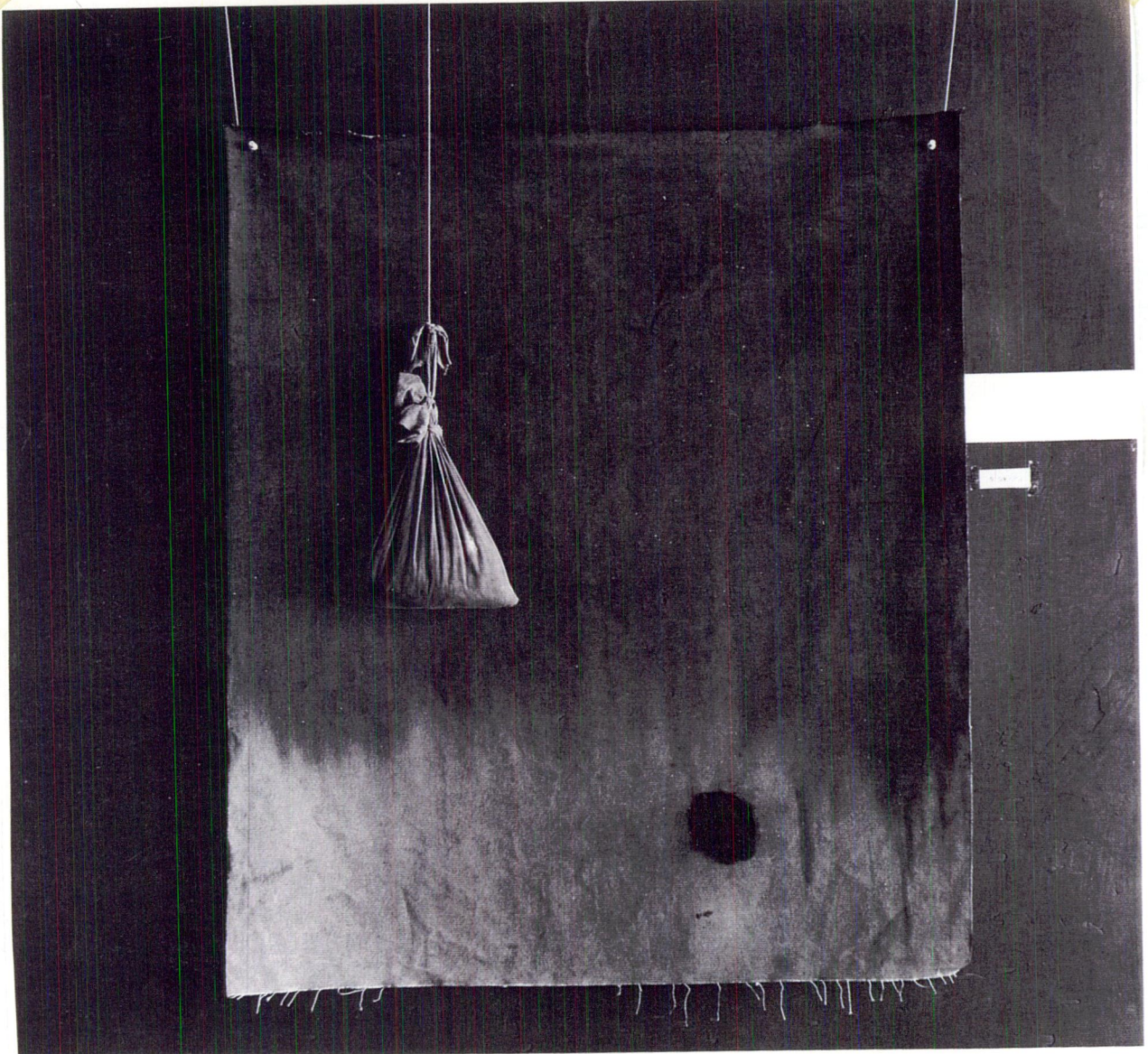
Some of Ono's objects and 'paintings' parallel aspects of her performance scripts in their attempts to remove the clutter of life in order to create an internal stillness and focus the viewers concentration. Her first exhibition took place at the Agnus Gallery 1961 and among the 'instruction paintings' there were: 'Painting for the Wind', 'Smoke Painting', and 'Painting to be Stepped on'.

'Painting for the Wind' featured a bag full of seeds which hung in front of a blank canvas and when the wind blew, seeds would fall out through the bags holes (fig 7).

In 'Smoke Painting', the viewer would light a match and watch the smoke against the canvas, viewer participation being essential to the piece.

'Painting to be Stepped On 1' recalls a childhood memory of stories of Japanese christian martyrs; in the 15th century a 'stepping painting' was used to distinguished christians from non-christians. A person was asked to step on a portrait of Christ, those who didn't were killed. As a child she was afraid to step on paintings; here she invites the viewer to relive her fear with her.

'Work to be Stepped On' (1961) illustrated in fig 8, invites the sames violation, and in doing so attacks the art oject. This piece breaks down the notion that art works should not be touched, as



PAINTING FOR THE WIND

Cut a hole in a bag filled with seeds of any kind and place the bag where there is wind.

1961 summer

PAINTING FOR WIND

Cut a hole. Cover with fine bamboo screen. Place it in the wind.

1961 summer

PAINTING FOR THE WIND

Make a hole. Leave it in the wind.

1961 autumn

Fig 7 - "Painting for the Wind" - Yoko Ono

1870

1871

1872

1873

1874

1875

1876

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1880

1881

1882

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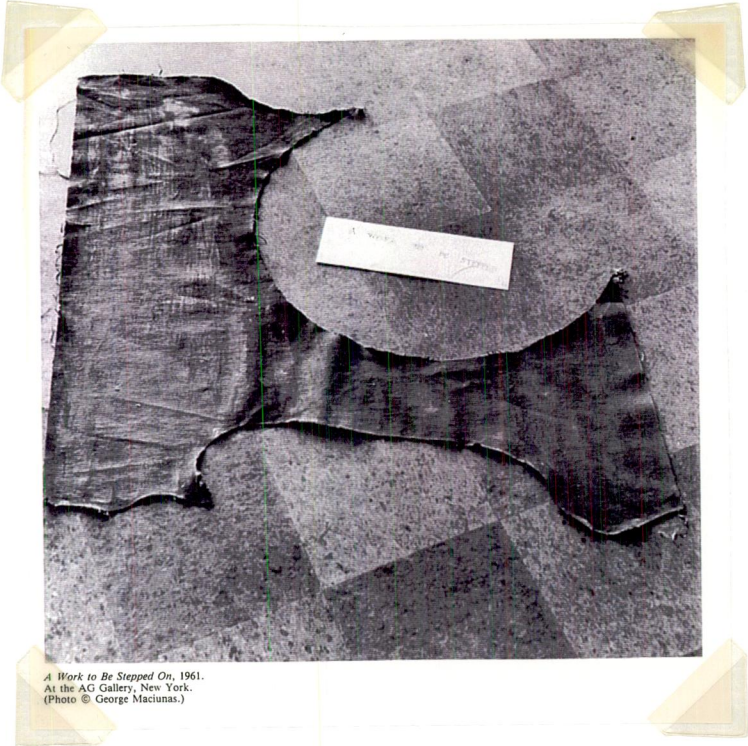
1900

stepping on the painting is essential to the piece, and the more marks that are made - the nearer the piece is to completion.

In their original context, Yoko Ono's sculpture embodied the essence of the avant-garde, described by Cage as 'an affirmation of life': "What I wanted to do", she explained, "was to give some life to sculpture. In my 'Nail it' (fig 9) piece, each time the nail is hammered in, the piece grows. It has a life. Its not the same as showing a set piece that you can't touch, you can't move, and it will stay eternally like that, my work is organic" (Hickok 1989).

In 'Painting to Shake Hands' - subtitled 'Painting for Cowards'-(1962), Yoko Ono stood behind a blank canvas with a wrist-sized hole in it through which her hand welcomed visitors to the exhibition. The effectiveness of this piece and pieces such as 'Nail it' and 'Work to be Stepped On' is enhanced according to the level of participation, and these pieces in turn becoming communal vessels for a 'collective subconscious'.

She became increasingly interested in situations or constructs that existed solely in the mind. 'Painting to be constructed in you head' (1962), called for the viewer to observe three paintings carefully and mix them well in their heads. 'Part Piece' (1961-71), presents the viewer with a torn up picture arranged jig-saw like fashion, and they assimilate the picture in their heads. 'Mend' (1962), fig 10, commands the viewer to imagine mending a broken ceramic object whose parts are presented on a pedestal. 'Pointedness' (1964), challenges the viewer to see the invible by



A Work to Be Stepped On, 1961.
At the AG Gallery, New York.
(Photo © George Maciunas.)

Fig 8 - "Work to be stepped on"

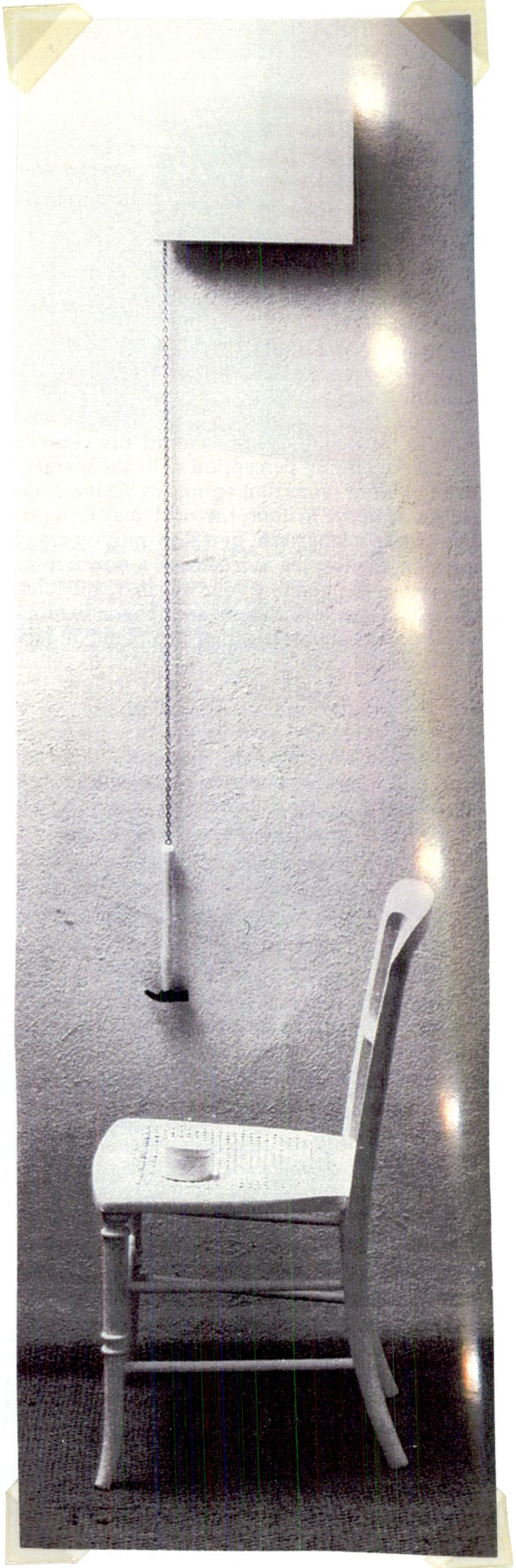
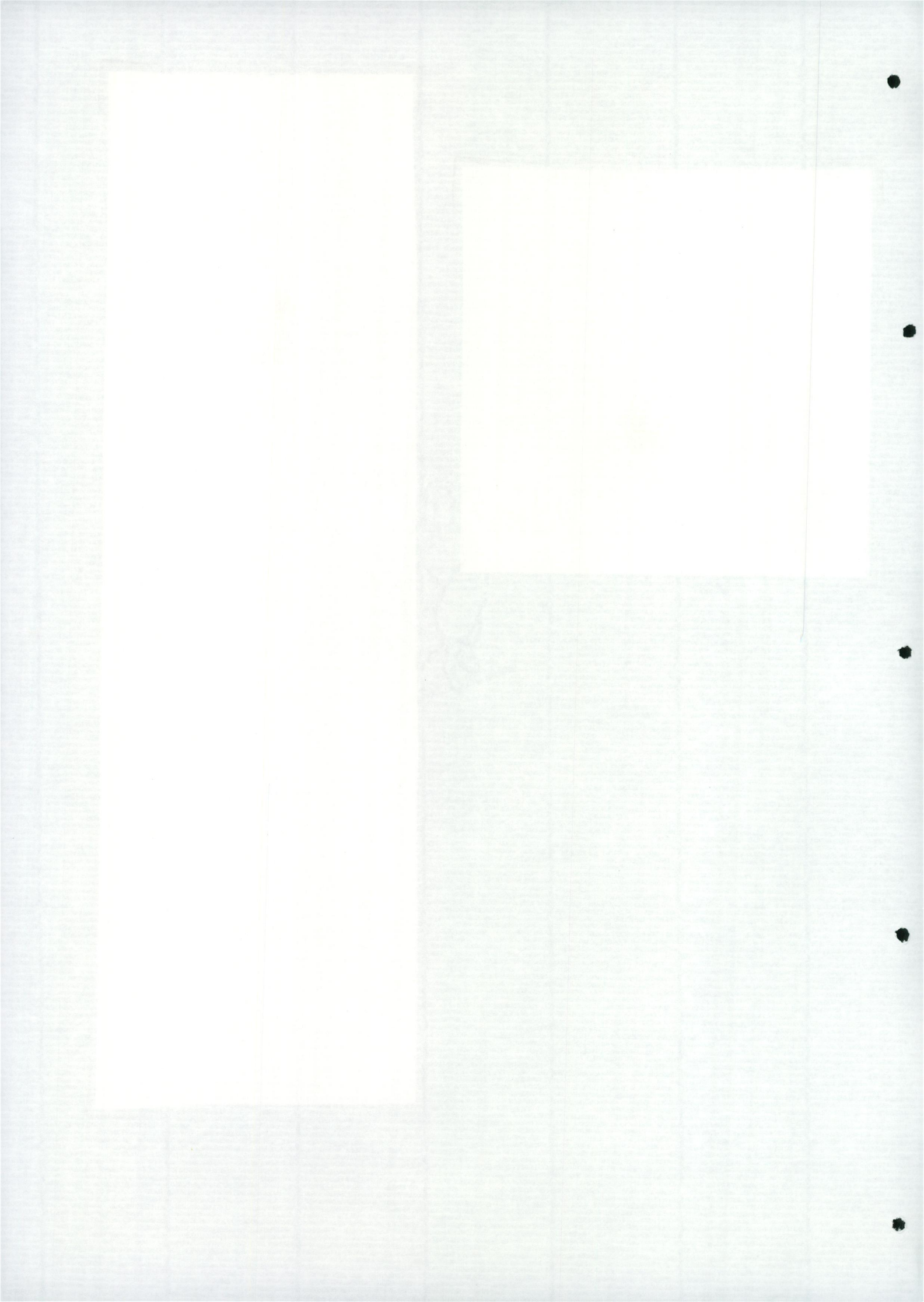
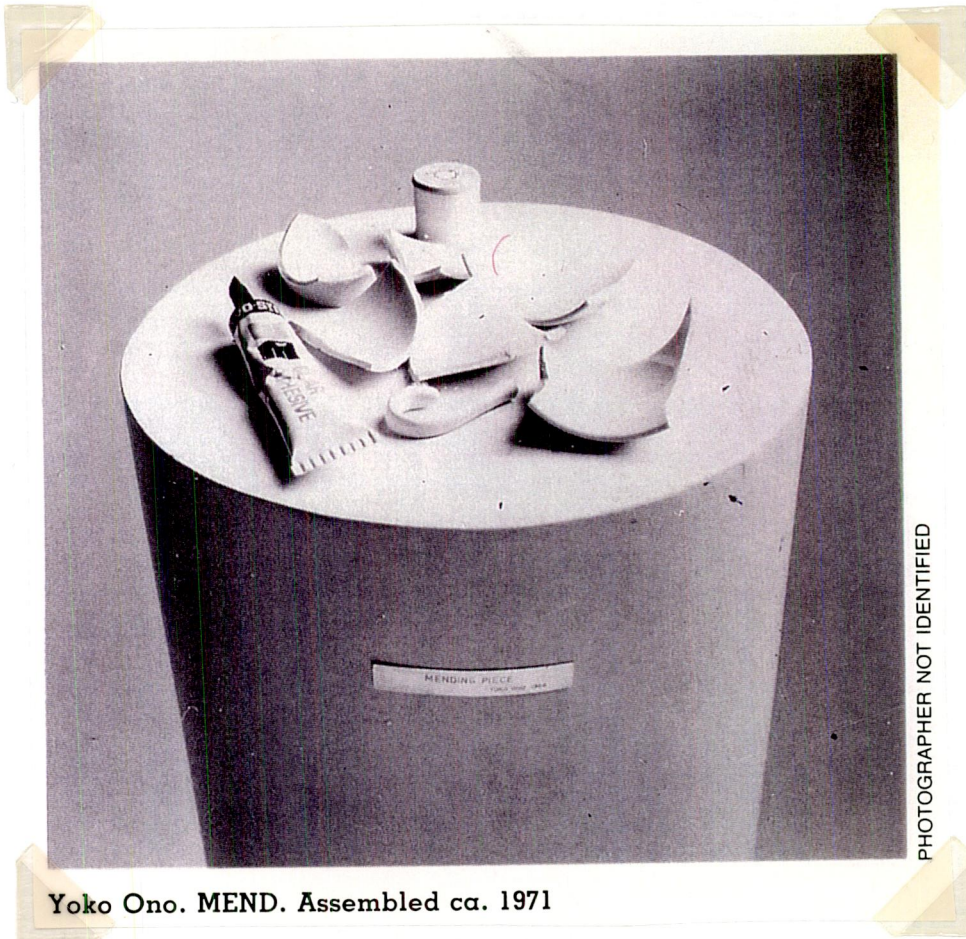


Fig 9 - "Nail it"





Yoko Ono. MEND. Assembled ca. 1971

Fig 10 - "Mend"



presenting a sphere on a pedestal with the accompanying text - "This sphere will be a sharp point when it gets in to the far corner of you mind".

Yoko Ono presented vending machines that sold evocative one word cards such as "sky" (Sky Dispenser 1966) and "air" (Air Dispenser 1971) - illustrated in fig 11a & 11b. Included in her Fluxus multiples are "Play it by Trust" (fig 12) and "Box of Smile"(fig 13), illustrated in fig 9. "Play it by Trust" is an all white chess piece, and is a simple and direct pacifist statement, confounding all attempts to play at war. 'Box of Smile', is a small steel box lined with a mirror at the bottom. This piece is a witty and mischievous trap, and the title keeps its promise when the viewer discovers it's own reflection. This piece residing in the brief instant between expectation and comprehension.

"Life is only half a game. Molecules are always at the verge of half disappearing, half emerging".(Ono 1966) By 1967, the 'Half a Wind' show in the Lisson Gallery, her work increasingly sought to address philosophic questions about the nature of reality. In this show were her 'Part Paintings' - each being a minute section of an object, demonstrating the similarity between disparate phenomena when shown microscopically. Moreover, included in the exhibition was a room of furniture and functional objects, cut in half, suggesting that memory and realities of the mind are as potent and eternal as those of concrete and physical presence - photograph of this room illustrated in fig 14.



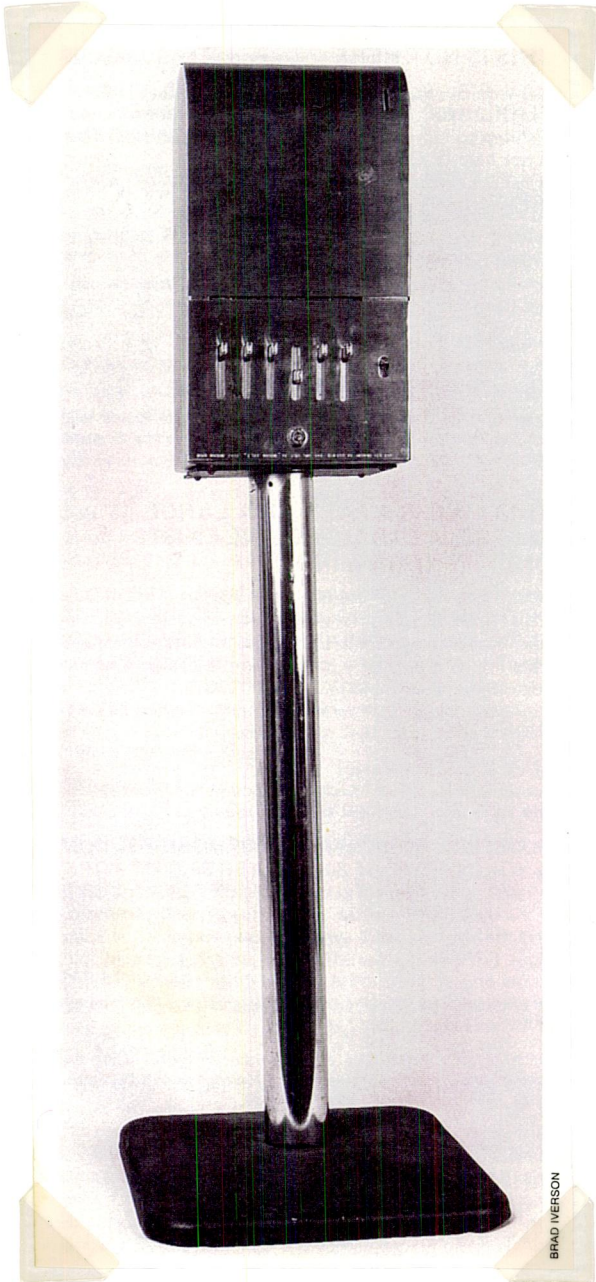


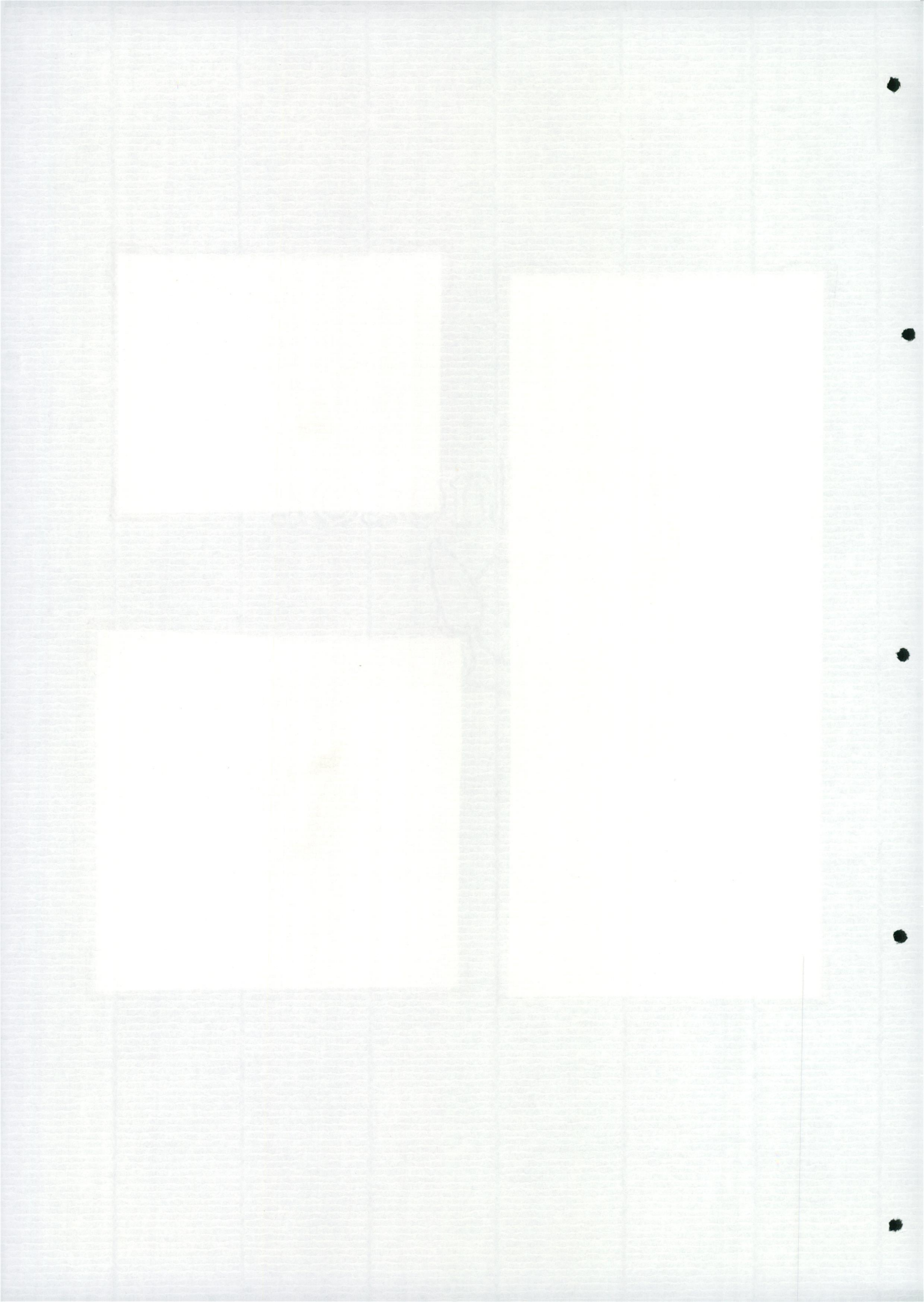
Fig 11a - "Sky Dispenser"



Fig 11a - from sky dispenser



Fig 11b - "Air Dispenser"



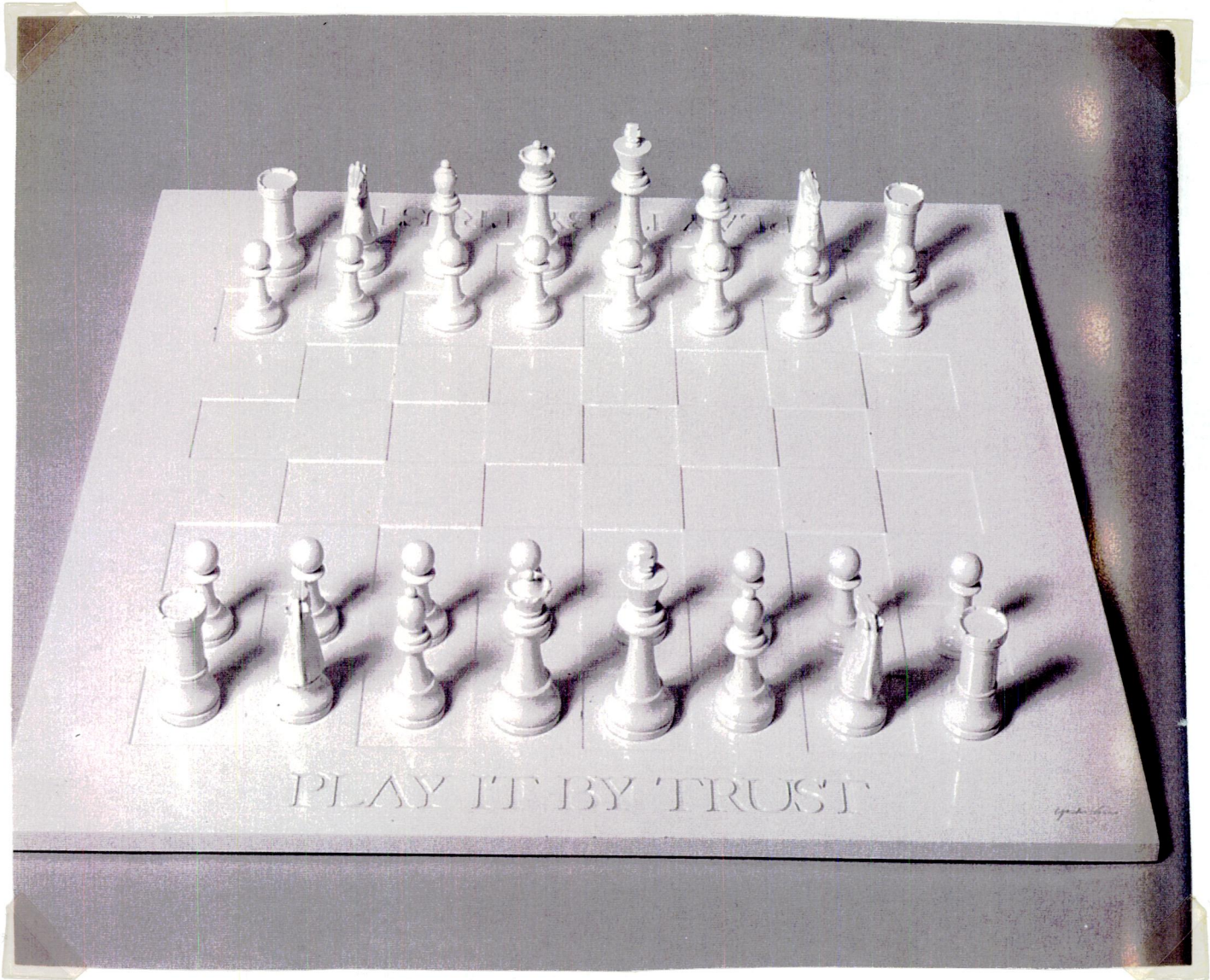


Fig 12 - "Play it by trust"



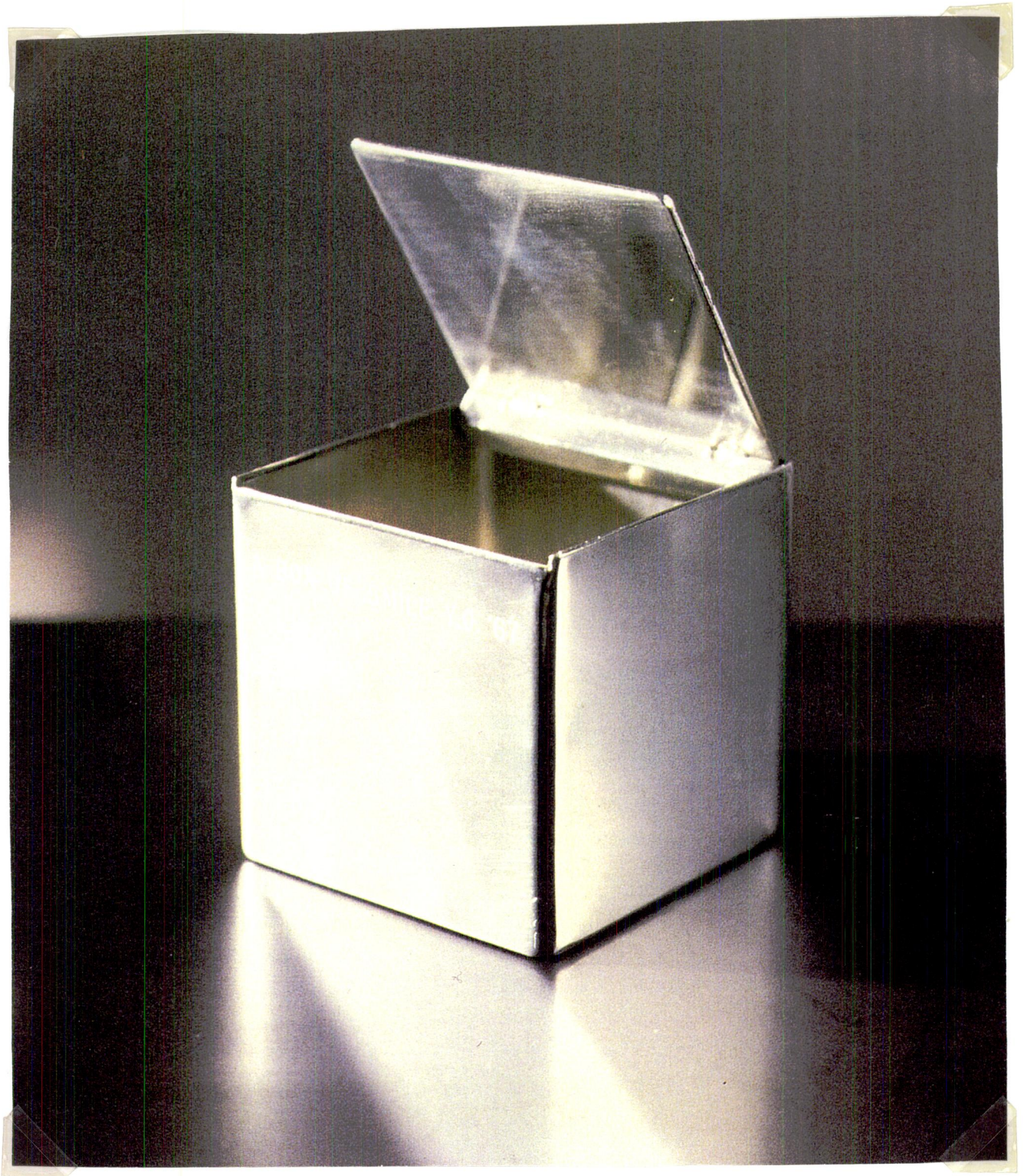


Fig 13 - "Box of Smile"



Half a Wind Show, November 1967.

Yoko Ono at her exhibition at the Lisson Gallery, London. (Photo Anthony Cox.)

Fig 14 - Photograph from "Half a Wind Show"

Her work can be divided into three approaches, the first where the participant is invited to perform an act as in her 'instruction' pieces. The second approach is one that starts in tangible form and ends in mental form, ie Part Piece. The third are considerations of the transformationness of reality, like 'Apple' (that will become seed) and 'Water' (that will evaporate) which challenge the viewer to see the invisible.

"The mind is omnipresent; events in life never happen alone and the history is forever increasing it's volume. The natural state of life and mind is complexity. At this point, what art can offer (if it can at all - to me it seems) is the absence of complexity, a vacuum through which you are led to a state of complete relaxation of mind". (Ono 1966)

Yoko Ono's idea of license, the setting up of a situation where others could complete the work of art instead of the artist was a radical departure from the existing concept of the role of the artist. Yoko Ono's greatest assault on the primacy and physicality of the object was through her 'Word Paintings'. Many of these are collected in her book 'Grapefruit'. Grapefruit contains scores written throughout the 1950's and 1960's for music, painting, events, poetry, and objects. Some of the 'Word Paintings' recall pieces produced, like "Painting to be Stepped on" and some resist materialization as in "Forget It" (fig 15).

Her work exemplifies a wonderment that suggests childlike awe, a way of seeing things as if you were entering a strange place,

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invisible until now and looking at this from an altered perspective, thus the everyday becomes numinus. In 'Touch Poem', Yoko Ono writes:

Give birth to a child
 See the world through its eye
 let it touch everything possible
 and leave its fingermark there
 in place of a signature

The theme of child, pain and loss, are used in 'City Piece'(1961), where the performer is directed to "walk all over the city with an empty baby carriage". The intensity of pain, and attempting to materialize pain, and finding witness or a comfortor, and themes of healing are expressed in 'Conversation Piece' (1962):

Bandage any part of you body
 if people ask about it, make a story and tell.
 If people do not ask about it draw
 their attention to it and tell.
 If people forget about it, remind
 them of it and keep telling.
 Do not talk about anything else.

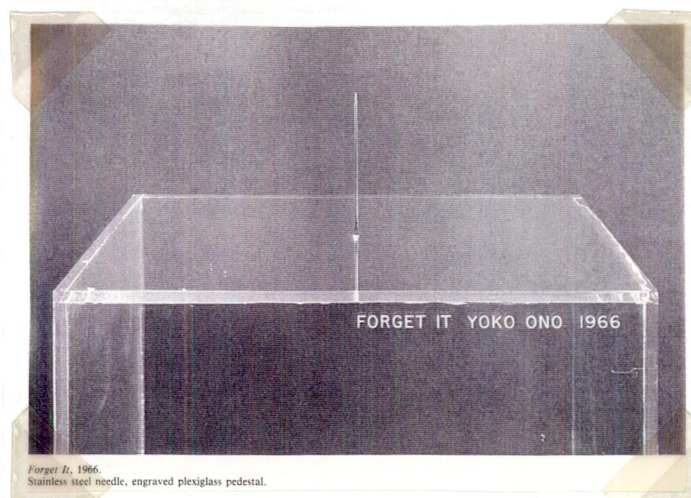


Fig 15 - "Forget it"

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iii Film

Fluxus film attempted to break down the cinematic process to the bare elements - light, film, motion, image, and again the focus was on the 'common place'. Roughly forty 'Fluxus' films were produced, these were mainly short experimental pieces, ie Peter Moore used a high speed slow motion camera that produced works, when projected at normal speed resulted in highly distended portraits, performance and motion studies.

Another important element of Fluxus films is the valorization of boredom as an artistic effect, a concept which was of major interest to many of the Fluxus artists. Influential to this, was John Cage, who wrote in his book *Silence*; "In Zen they say: if something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If it still boring, try it for eight, sixteen, thirty-two, and so on. Eventually one discovers that it is not boring after all but very interesting".(Cott & Doudna 1984 p 117)

Yoko Ono's film explore the workings of time, action, violation and voyeurism within the workings of the cinematic apparatus, possessing a wide-eyed, candidness and sometimes indifference. This minimal approach and long duration of the films were used to focus the viewer back onto themselves.

She openly allowed her film work to contain a certain amateur and anti-professionalistic impression, this do-it-yourself approach



is as much a direction to the viewer - as a home-movie for everyone.

In 1964. Ono had privately published a six paragraph-long 'film scripts' that humourously question the nature of the film medium from the stand-points both of production and consumption.

One year later, Ono contributed two films to the 1965 Fluxus Film Program. 'Film no. 1' was a slow motion shot of a match striking.. 'Film no. 4' was a close up of a succession of 12 naked 'bottoms' (this was later entitled 'Bottoms' when it was extended to 365 'bottoms' and lengthened to a duration of over an hour) - questionnaire relating to this film in fig 16.

One of her film scripts simply gave instructions to document all the reactions of a group of people watching and listening to the filmmaker; another was to distribute scissors to an audience so that they could cut their favourite part of the film out from the screen. One of the instructions to the viewer in Film no. 5 (1964) is "not to look at Rock Hudson but only Doris Day", forcing the spectator to make their own version of the film.

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Chapter 3

Towards the end of the 1960's there began collaborations between rock musicians and avant garde filmmakers, and underground movies used rock and roll soundtracks. In 1966 Andy Warhol featured the Velvet Underground in his film 'The Exploding Plastic Inevitable'. In 1967, Robert Nelson made two short films with the Grateful Dead. Mick Jagger appeared in "Performance" in 1967.

Underground film gained much impetus after 1960, becoming the democratic ideal of free expression. The Underground enshrined the camera as a wild, wilful, inquisitive edge, disposed to give graphic publicity to everything that had remained taboo in the realm of popular commercial films. The very existence of the camera eye implied an optical omniscience from which nothing can be concealed.

Underground film received the name 'fetish footage', this term echoing the raw footage which was shown as part of the film. One of the strengths of Underground film is the showing of the entire film and presenting the viewer with a seemingly inflated episode, as well as the unarticulated 'solid time' of Andy Warhol's fixed viewpoint camera.

Andy Warhol rolled back cinema to a certain artless primitive beginning. In his early films the situation is given "a la tableau vivant"; and thereafter what does or doesn't happen is dependent

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on the entrance actors. To the spectator it is like viewing a scene through a very large keyhole - eaves-dropping on eventlessness.

Warhol's film 'The Chelsea Girls' tells of various supposed residents of the Chelsea Hotel and their friends. 'The Chelsea Girls' counter points 2 scores by projecting them simultaneously side-by-side as one dualistic image. The actions are simultaneous in time but separate in action, this separate space is expressed by the side-by-side reels as each reel runs out.

In 1968 John Lennon and Yoko Ono released their first movie. Films produced by Yoko Ono and John Lennon at this time fall into two categories. The first type were promotional shorts such as, 'Instant Karma' and 'Give Peace A Chance', which were done in a semi-autobiographical nature, half lifestyle documentaries, half rhythmic montages. In these, there was a recasting of life through film and song as old and new images created a dialectic between history and memory, art and life.

The second category (made between 1968 and 1971) were more of a conceptual nature. While films produced in this time were collaborations, some of the ideas behind each film belonged exclusively to one or the other.

The first collaborations done with Lennon were 'Number 5' aka Smile and 'Two Virgins', these were portrait type films and done in the spirit of home movies. "Number 5" is a 52 minute film of John Lennon sticking out his tongue, raising eyebrows and smiling

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twice, similar to the Fluxfilm "Disappearing Music for Face". "Two Virgins" is 19 minutes long and the film moves between both of their faces, superimposing one on the other.

For her film 'Fly' the score is: "let a fly walk on a woman's body from toe to head and fly out the window". The subject is a fly, closely followed by the camera as it moved about the landscape of a nude female body, stills illustrated in fig 17. The soundtrack of Fly is a voice piece by Ono. The distinctive sound of her voice becomes the sound of the fly and the expressive range of her voice seeks to invest the movement with meaning. She later remarked on this film "I wondered how many people would look at the fly or at the body - everyone is that female, just lying down and taking it".(Cott & Doudna 1984 p 130)

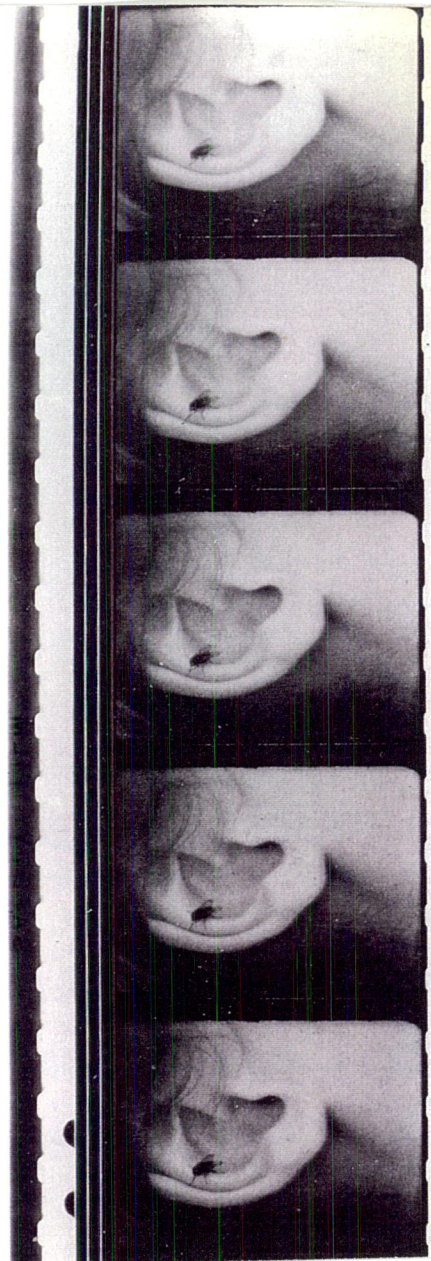
"The camera man will chase a girl on a street with a camera persistently until he corners her in an alley, and if possible, until she is in a falling position". This idea was used in the film 'Rape', and is her most disturbing piece of film displaying a dark undercurrent found in some of her performance pieces.

The film begins without titles and the camera 'spies' a long haired woman and follows her. The film approximated real-time, as each roll of film ends, the crew reload and have to catch up on the woman again. The woman's initial curiosity and openness turn to frustration and anger as the camera relentlessly pursues her. The woman is followed to her apartment and into her apartment. At the end of the film she makes a phone call and starts to





Fly, 1970.
Filmstills.



FILM NO.13 FLY by yoko ono, copyright '68
Let a fly walk on a woman's body from toe to head and
fly out of the window.

Fig 17 - Stills from "Fly"

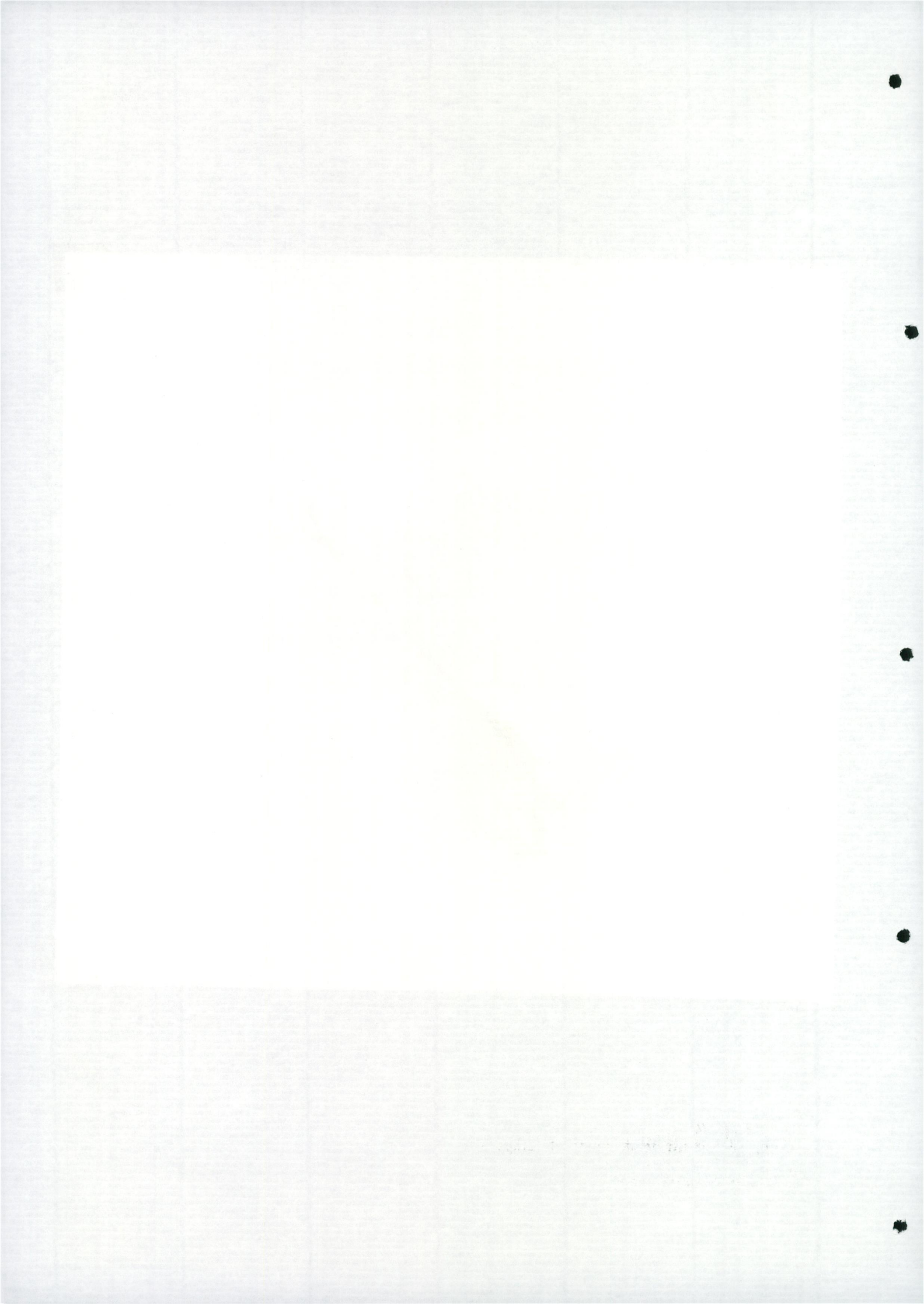
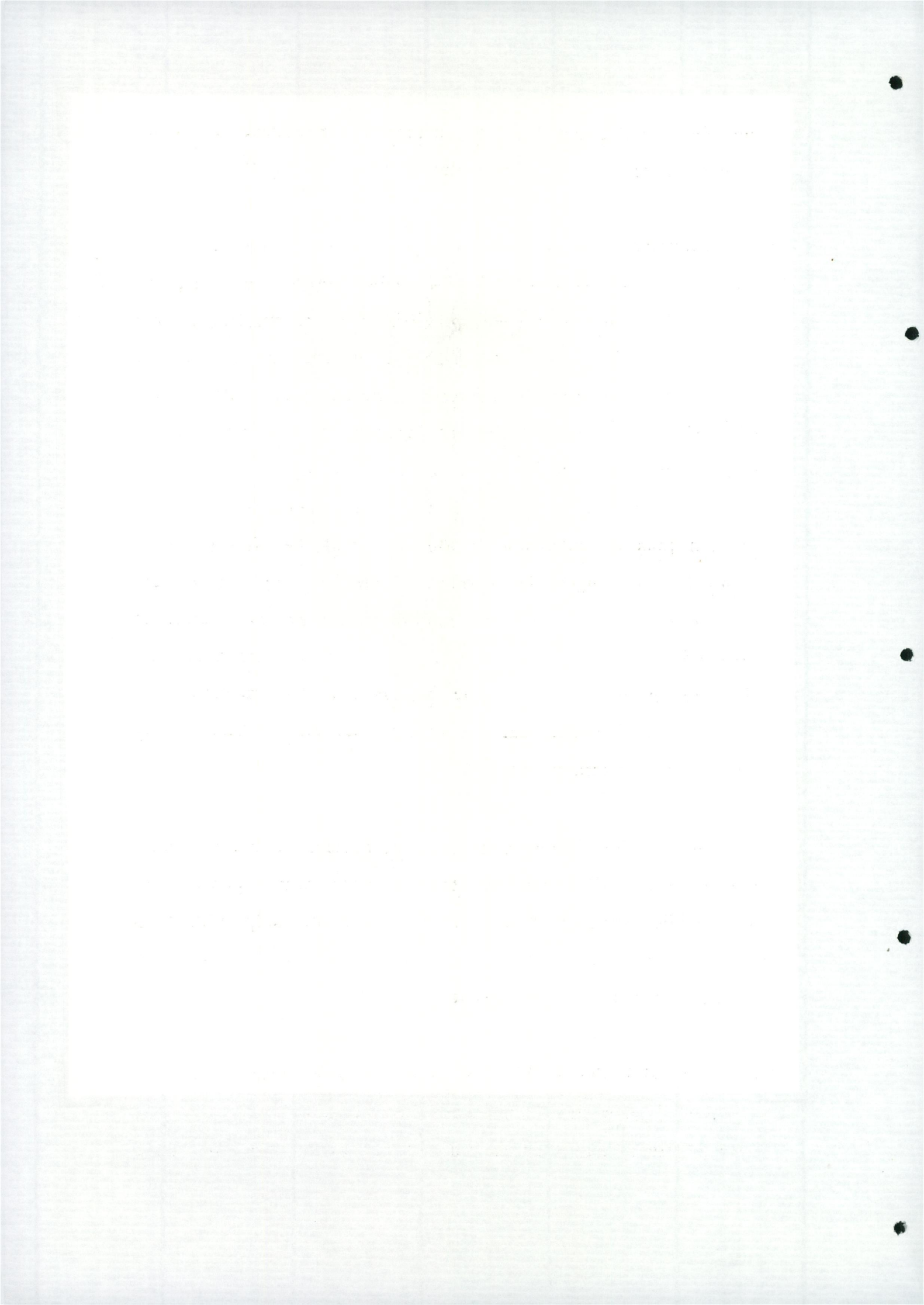




Fig 18 - Stills from shoot of "Rape"



shout about her passport. The sound of her distress continues over the credits, stills from this film illustrated in fig 18.

The uniqueness of this film derives from its narrative ambivalence: is this woman in fact being pursued or is she an actress. She does not speak English, yet we understand her actions and emotions. This is a film that explores the issue of the camera as a transgressor of privacy. In one sense, 'Rape' is a particularly brutal dramatization of Warhol's 'discovery' that the camera's implacable stare could disrupt ordinary behaviour and enforce its own response, now becoming an invader of the human body and thus an extension of the crew and the viewer/voyeur. It radically challenges the normally privileged position of the viewer which is of a passive nature, and now the viewer is confronted with a moral dilemma, ie by watching this piece are they condoning the contents. The film is a graphic metaphor for the ruthless surveillance that can theoretically attach itself to any citizen of the modern world.

This film was shot following a period of adverse publicity in their personal lives. This film reflects her once nearly private life turned public property as a result of her relationship with John Lennon. This media interest in them was turned to their advantage for their 'Bed-in' event.

"When we did the Bed-in in Toronto, there was a specific instruction, I understand, from the Government to the Press, the American Press, that they should not put us on the front page

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because they did initially when we did the Bed-in: so I think that they were thinging that our 'Peace and Love' movement was very subversive..." (Peebles 1981 p 43) The idea for 'Bed-in' was a simple statement for world peace. 'Bed-in' subverted both conventional and radical politics by fusing the public art-event with a private event. 'Bed-in' also defied racism, classism, and sexism and it presented an aristocratic Asian woman with a European working class man with the representation of a marriage of equality.

After the 1968 'retirement' of Andy Warhol, John Lennon and Yoko Ono inherited the position as the world's most notorious "underground" filmmakers. *Smile*, *Rape*, and *Fly* were virtually the only avant garde films of their period that received sufficient media coverage to impinge upon popular consciousness. This of course was a factor of their prior celebrity and it is precisely this celebrity that has complicated their films' subsequent reputation - dismissed as inexplicable put-ons by an offended public, their work was mistaken for idle pretension by the avant garde as well.

Other collaborations done with Lennon included the Plastic Ono Band and their advertising and billboard art. Advertising space in 'Art and Artist' magazine was used for artworks thus bypassing the gallery structure to convey art and to a wider audience. They used posters and billboard art, then a mostly unexplored form, for works such as "WAR IS OVER, If you want it" (Fig 19) and to promote the Plastic Ono Band. The Plastic Ono Band started off as a "concept band" and was intended to be an electronic band.





Fig 19 - "WAR IS OVER" 1969 Billboard Event, Times Square New York -
Photo: Peter Moore



Initially the recordings included the more commercial sing-along type such as "Give Peace a Chance", and by the 1970's Yoko Ono developed the work as an extension of performance exploring the same kind of psychologically evocative distortions as did the work of Meridith Monk. In recordings such as "Cold Turkey", Ono chokes on words then spits them out, with Lennon's jarring shrill electric guitar in the background.

All three of their recording collaborations, *Two Virgins*, *Life with the Lions*, and *Wedding Album* are aural recordings of two peoples living their lives together including conversations and montaging of sounds and tunes.

Her five solo albums document an avant garde artist's gradual education in pop music. These albums were highly experimental and uneven. Her approach reflecting the profound cultural schism, having been trained in classical music and having a good knowledge of Japanese traditional instruments and kabuki songs.

Their final collaboration was the album 'Double Fantasy'. Their one previous attempt to contributing songs to the same album had been the stridently political and much maligned 'Some Time in New York City' and when the contents of 'Double Fantasy' were first announced the press awaited it cynically. In this last collaboration, the energies, anxieties and frustrations are successfully channelled becoming evocative and engaging recordings.



Her music evolved from minimalist vocals as in 'Don't Worry Kyoko (Mummy's only looking for her hand in the snow)' 1969 to heavy progressive rock as in 'We're all water' 1972 to a consolidation of 'avant garde' rock in 'Walking on Thin Ice'.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is essential for the proper management of the organization's finances and for ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

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3. The third part of the document discusses the role of the accounting department in the overall financial management process. It highlights the department's responsibility for providing timely and accurate financial information to management and other stakeholders.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the issue of internal controls. It explains how a strong system of internal controls can help to prevent and detect errors and fraud, and how this can contribute to the organization's overall financial health and stability.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of regular financial reporting. It notes that this is a key component of the financial management process and that it provides management with the information they need to make informed decisions about the organization's future.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the role of the external auditor. It explains that the auditor's primary responsibility is to provide an independent opinion on the organization's financial statements and to ensure that they are prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the importance of transparency and accountability in financial management. It notes that these are key principles that should guide all financial activities and that they are essential for building trust and confidence among stakeholders.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the role of the board of directors in financial management. It explains that the board has a fiduciary duty to the organization and that it is responsible for overseeing the financial management process and for ensuring that the organization's financial resources are used in the best interests of the organization.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the financial management process. It notes that this is a continuous process and that it is essential for ensuring that the organization's financial management practices remain effective and efficient over time.

10. The tenth part of the document discusses the role of the financial management team in the overall financial management process. It highlights the team's responsibility for implementing and maintaining the financial management system and for providing ongoing support and guidance to other departments.

Chapter 4

"All work reflects the age it was produced in. The fragility of my work at the time was very 1960's, that transient quality. And in the eighties suddenly there was this whole corporate mood..." (Dannatt 1991 p 114)

Inactive as an 'artist' for over 10 years, Yoko Ono decided to recast some of her 1960's pieces to include in her 1989 exhibition at the Whitney Museum, entitled "The Bronze Age".

The bronzing of her 1960's pieces was an attempt to create a new version of the past. This approach came from a 1987 visit to Leningrad, where on the walls of a palace she saw the photographs of each room in its original opulent state, beside each photograph there was a photograph of the same room in ruins after Hitler's invasion and these were hanging in a newly ornamented space. So each room had become a completely new version of the past yet the idea of the room remained the same.

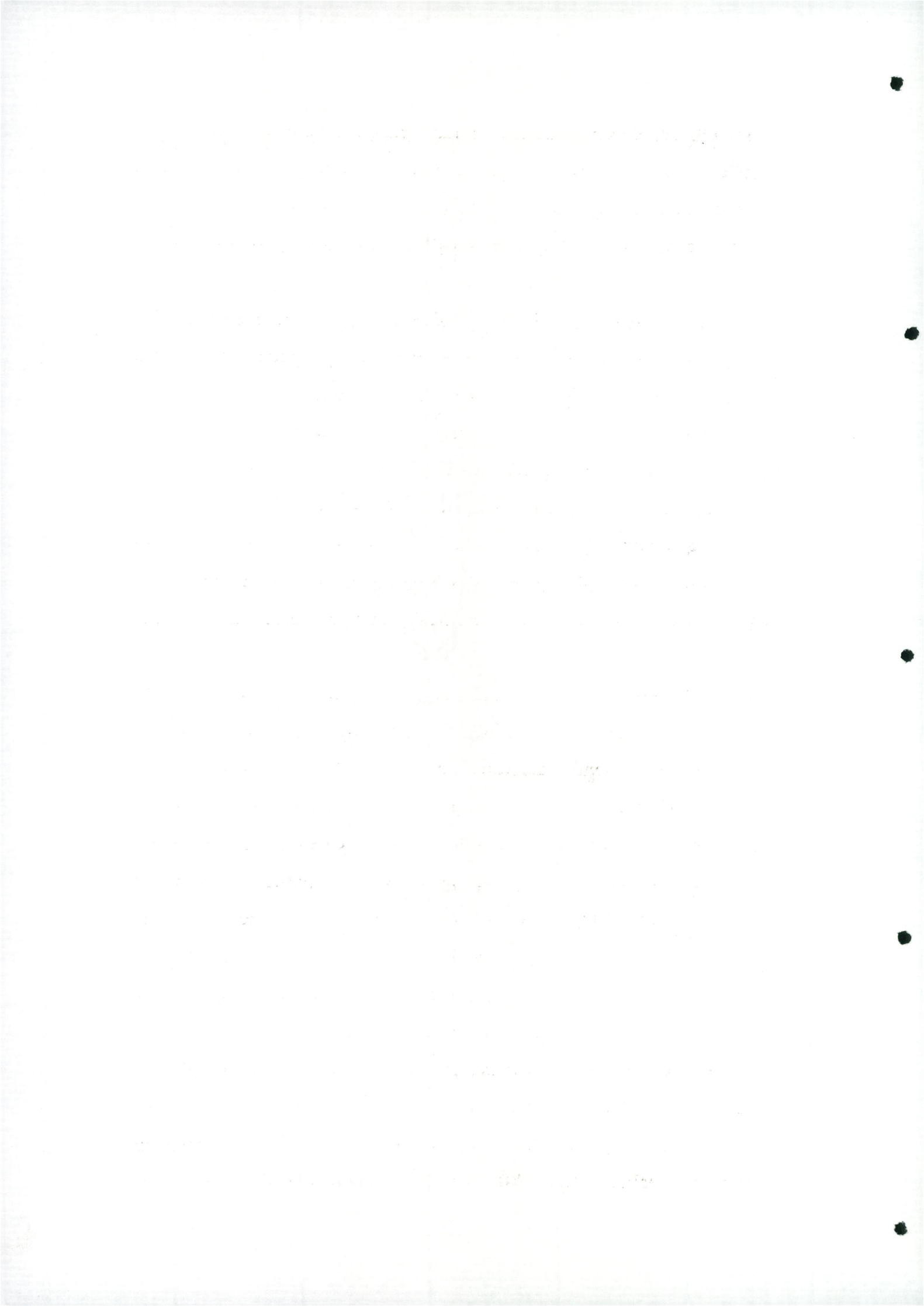
For Yoko Ono, recasting her work in bronze, typified the 1980's as an age of commodity and solidity, asserting that our experiences, thoughts, and ideas are increasingly reduced to exchangeable objects. "A bronze age is in fact what we are experiencing - and we live in times of rhetoric"(Dannatt 1991 p 115). There has been a discursive intensification of art that accepts a continuity with the 'common place' through the language of the shop window, the power of persuasion, that implies

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exposition and protection, offer and reserve, use and contemplation. In *Bronze Age* she confronts the schism between her old ideological base and the present concerns of high-finance art through an art so obscenely marketable that it actually offends the vulgar hypocrisy of commercial discretion by its leap into the insensitivities of moneyed taste. To this extent she has destroyed the delicacy and poetry of her 1960's work by recasting it in bronze.

In the exhibition, the original pieces are placed beside the recastings, this juxtaposition creates a strange dichotomy, maybe the one cast in bronze is the past, and the one that comes from the past is the present. The modesty of the presentation is disarming and tempts the imagination, creating a quiet contemplative situation that we can be drawn into. Her work exists best in an atmosphere of quiet and patient involvement. The formal and simple presentation allows the 'idea' to remain central. The bronzing also makes a testimony of the thought behind each piece. The main aspect of 'The Bronze Age' is that there is no longer an interaction with the pieces, but this highlights the 'age of commodities' idea - you don't walk on them - you don't own them.

Bronze Age also included castings of mundane domestic objects such as a bread board, and hairbrush and painted with trickles of red. "Bronze casts of Lennons trademark wire rimmed glasses are painted realistically - complete with blood stains and a bullet hole from his assassin's gun. These works are in editions of one (with one artists proof) further asserting the singular frozen quality of

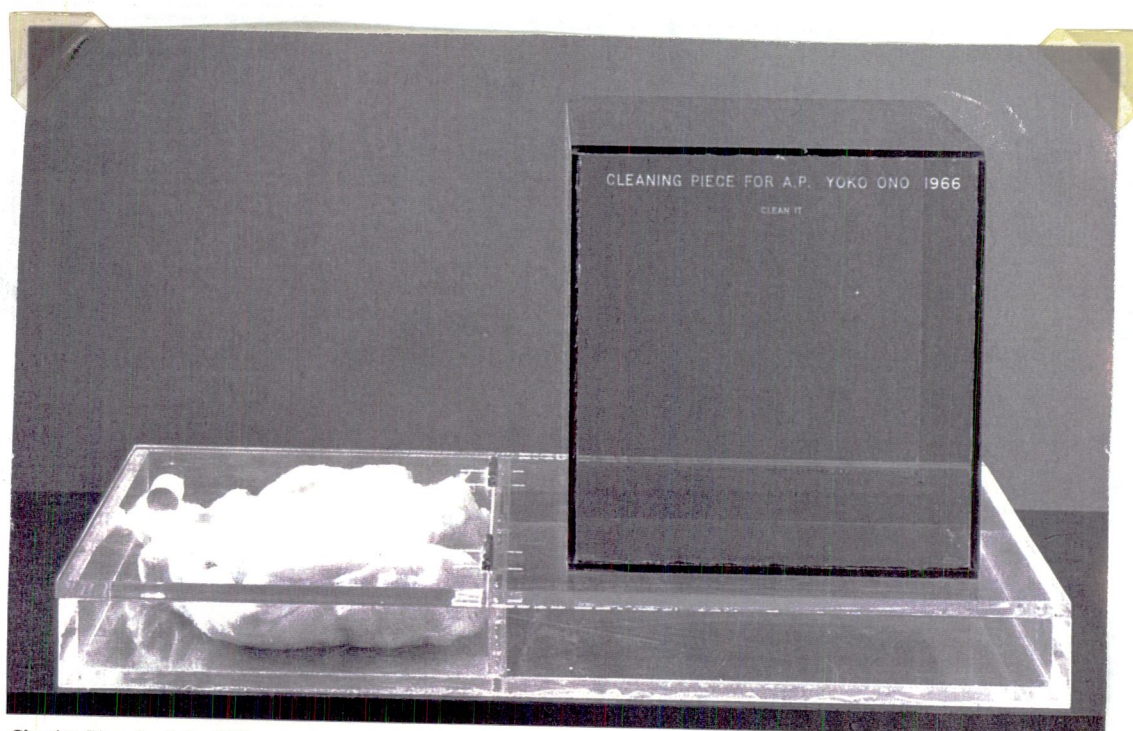


these biographically charged trauma-ridden symbols from Ono's past"(Duncan 1993 p139). These hints of violence in the trickles of red and bleak photomontages introduce a plaintive note expressing the vulnerability and bleakness in contemporary life.

Bronze age also engages in a new dialogue with earlier pieces. By casting these piece in bronze, the concept is maintained but the material changed. Cleaning piece originally was a plexiglass cube with a rag and the instruction clean it, and while cube is recast in bronze the object and action are still tied together and the idea is the same - fig 20. The recasting of 1966 Apple, a bronze version is placed beside an empty case suggesting original has been consumed. The plexiglass keys suggest keys to hopeful times, and the same keys in bronze look heavy and less precious - fig 21.

Detractors see the recasting of these pieces to be both unimaginative and materialistic. "The gesture of bronzing her early work is blatantly derivative of Koons, Warhol etc"(Liu 1989 p 131). When her work is compared to Koons, her work appears even more anachronistic, but unlike Koons' castings, Ono's pieces still retain a certain integrity, sincerity, and pathos even when recast. By recasting them she hints at a reconciliation with the past, referring to this past and introduces feelings of a paradise lost, a different time, and own personal loss. Achille Bonita Oliva asserts that "the Japanese-American Artist's responds to a homologated universe by expanding her field of action, by placing inside the art's frame the simulacra of consumer objects and of consumption itself, the last act of intersocial relations between people and reality. Undoubtly, consumption also tends to stabilize

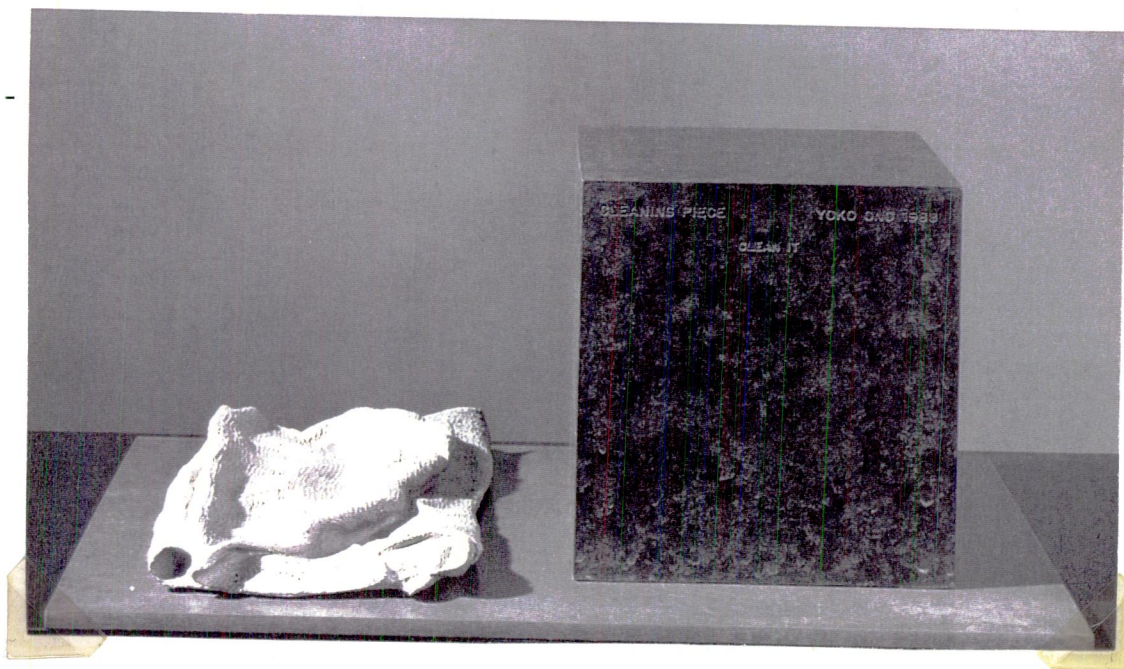


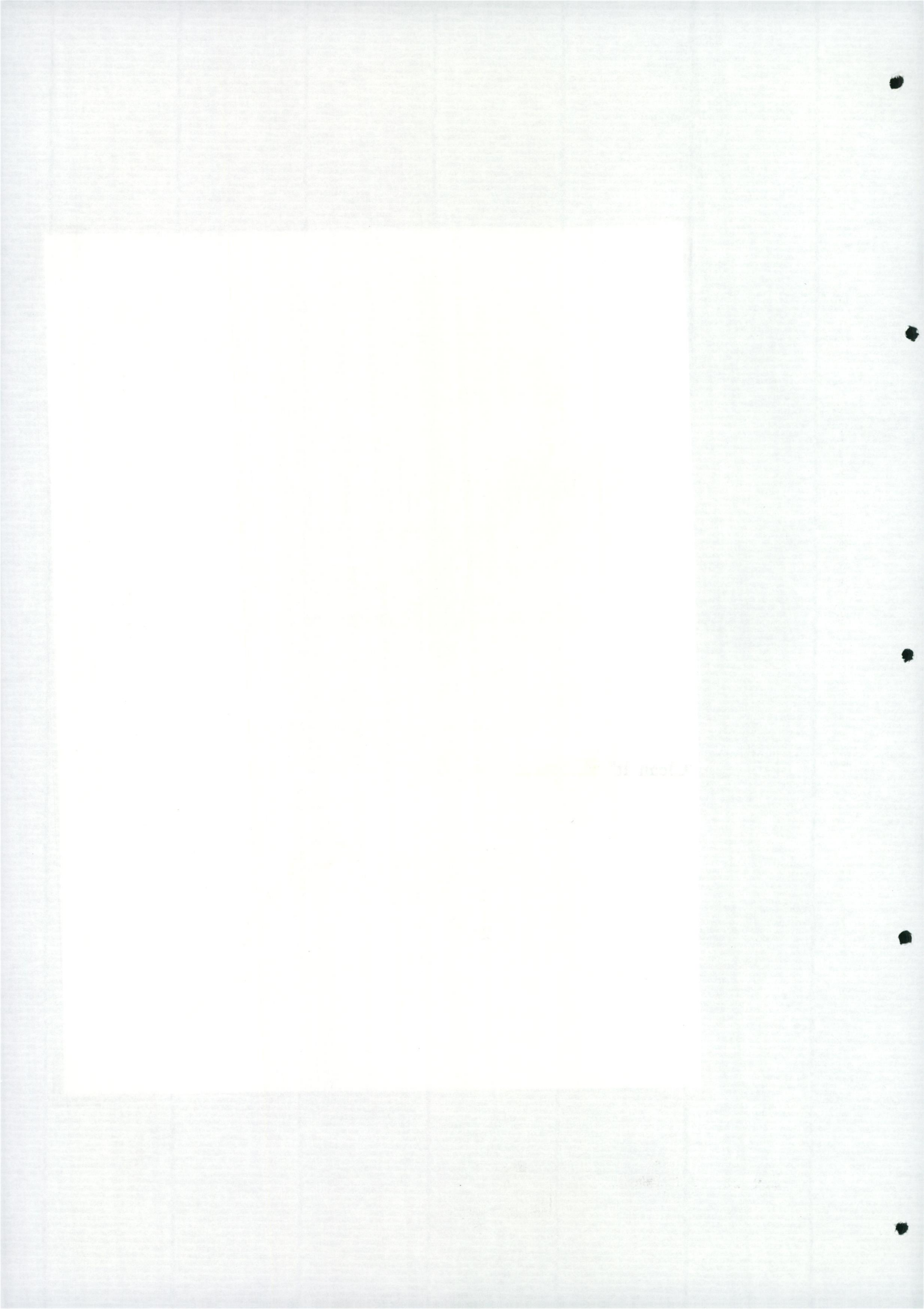


Cleaning Piece for A.P., 1966.
With instructions: "Clean it".
Engraved plexiglass, cloth.

Cleaning Piece, 1966-88.
With instructions: "Clean it".
Bronze, engraved corian base.

Fig 20 -





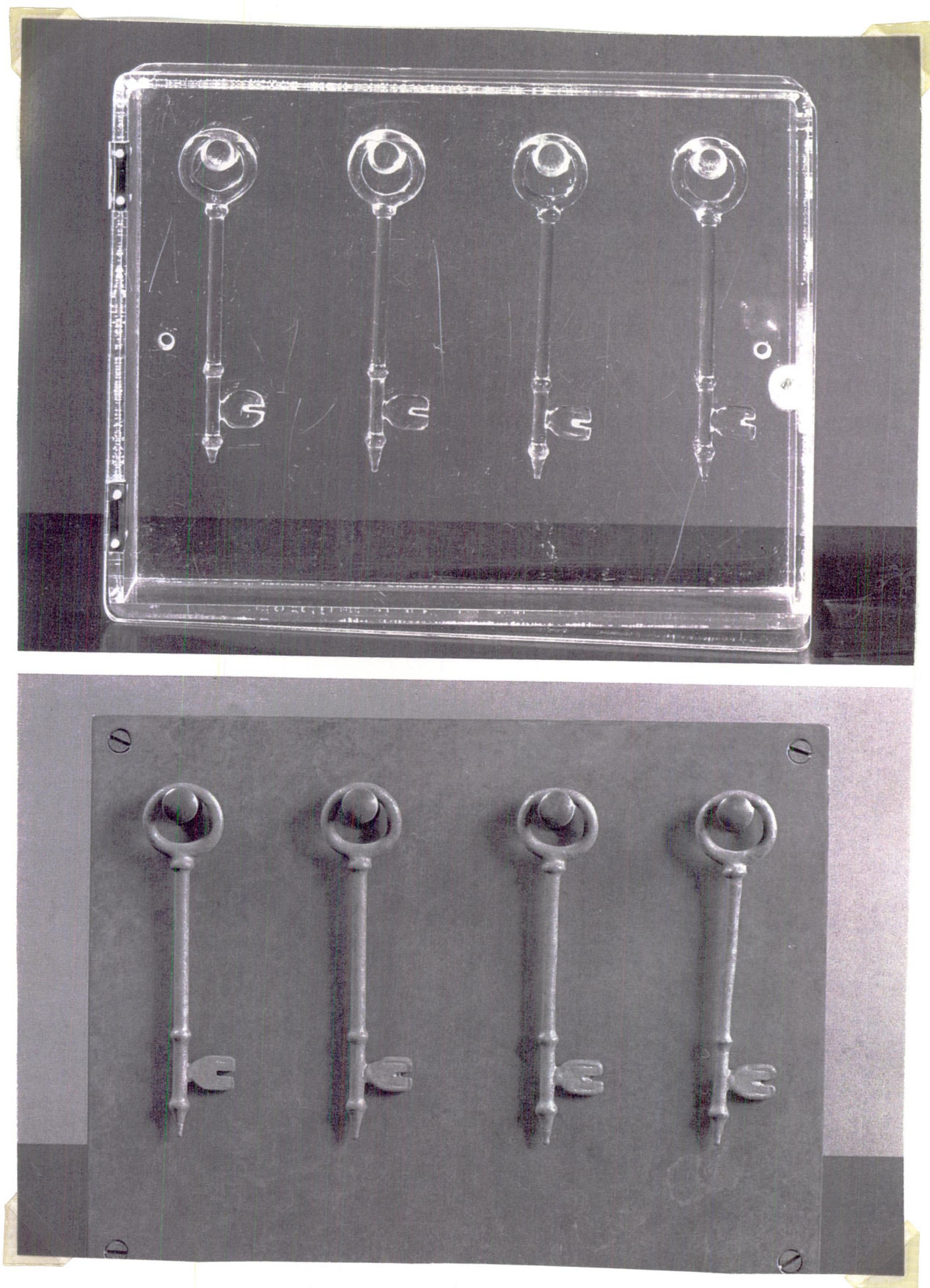
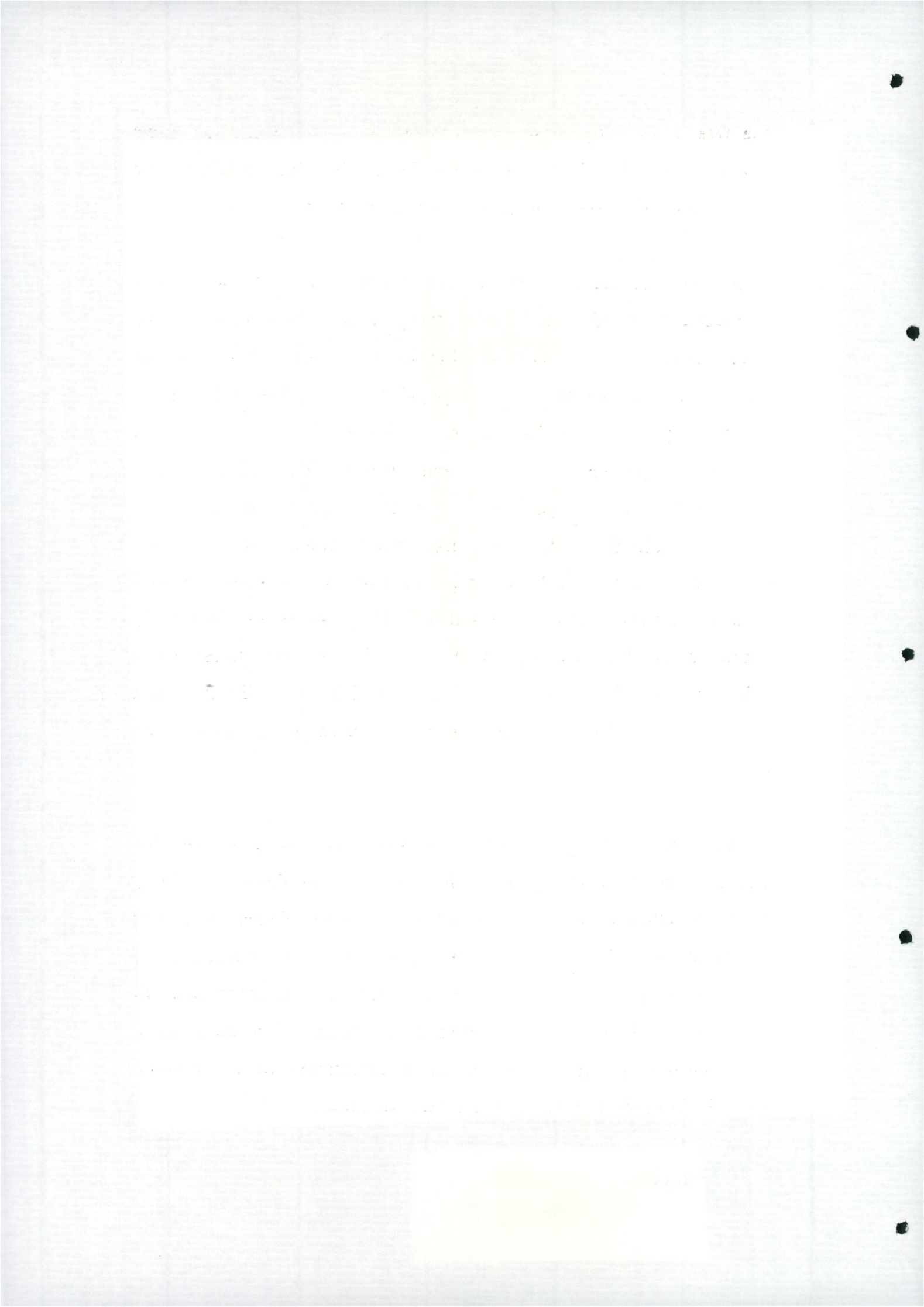


Fig 21 - *Glass Keys to Open the Skies, 1967.*
Four glass keys, plexiglass, brass hinges.

Keys to Open the Skies, 1967-88.
Bronze.



the fate of the subject, to fix its transactions with reality in terms of a passivity that leaves no space for an imagination alternative to the productive scenario."(Hendricks 1990 p 11)

Koons' castings have a 'glitzy' 1980's approach with involves a comparable form of flash freezing for posterity. Jeff Koons is the hyperrealisation of the contradiction of our age. After selecting images and collectables from the popular culture, Koons has them sumptuously executed by expert craftsmen in stainless steel, porcelain or polychromed wood and enlarges the pieces to near human scale. The images are of advertising, music, and a kitsche culture. Added to this 'representation' Koons has carefully maintained his own PR campaign to project his own personal persona. Koons packages himself through a series of elaborately staged, airbrushed advertisements that feature the artist in a variety of situations - with babes, schoolchildren (fig 22), and animals; images of sex and power are used to dominate and control.

His depictions and presentation are sharp and focused, yet his message is far from clear. These images of Koons show us nothing, but a reflection of a media culture that doesn't adequately reflect or promote a social dynamic. To a great extent our experience is governed by pictures produced by the media. However next to these presentations, our own personal experience has diminished. Media portrayals once served as an interpretation of a situation, now this imagery has become it's own situation.

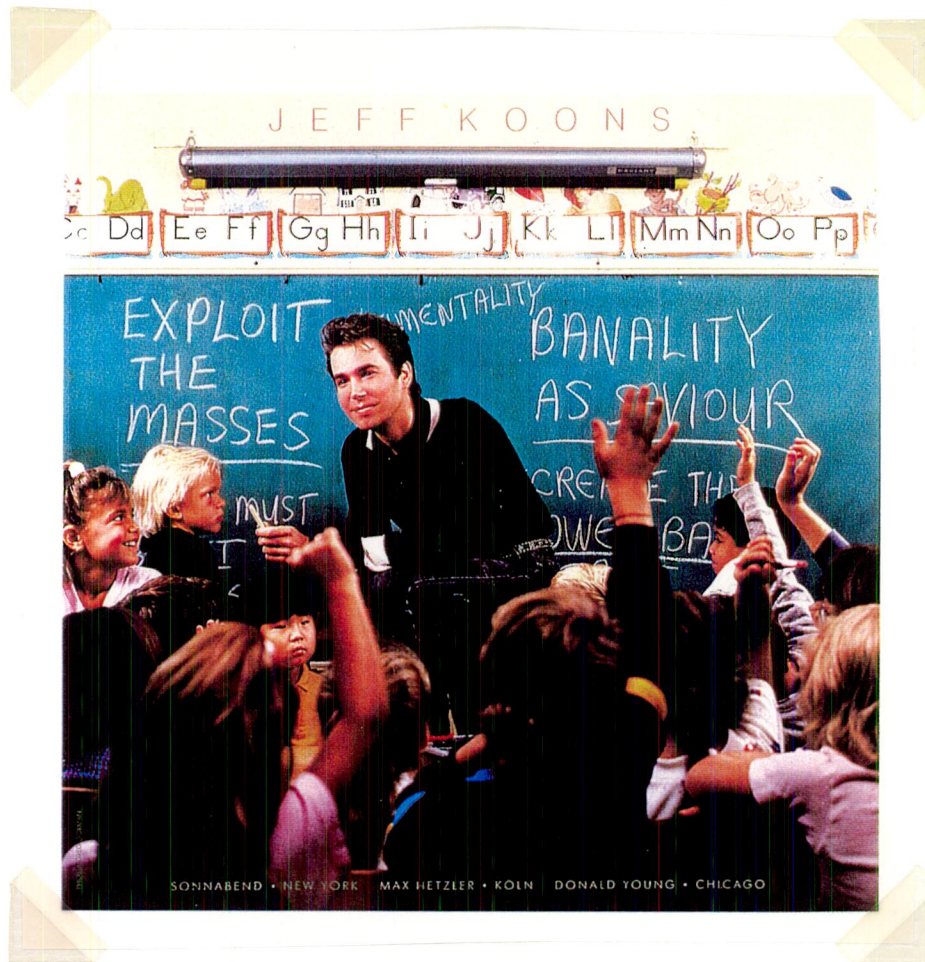


Fig 22 - Koons' advertisement in Artforum 1989

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. This ensures transparency and allows for easy verification of the data. The second section covers the process of reconciling accounts, highlighting the need to compare the company's internal records with the bank statements. Any discrepancies should be investigated immediately to prevent errors from accumulating. The final part of the document provides a summary of the key points and offers some practical advice for managing the accounting process efficiently. It concludes by stating that consistent and accurate record-keeping is essential for the long-term success of any business.

"For Fluxus, art is the shift or the process that takes life from one level of existence to another"(Achille 1990 p36). Yoko Ono's work has the ability to mirror cultural formations while simultaneously maintaining the view of her own private reality.

Koons' glorification of the kitsche culture is the down-side of the post modern. He sells his work as a slick gimmick which has more in common with a marketing campaign - "The trick is to be outrageous but not offensive"(Joachimides & Rosenthal 1993 p 458). We are left helpless before this view that our culture has become an anthology of indifferent images, a bric-a-brac of imitations where nothing means anything because everything is the same as everything else. This offers a threat of a stifling global uniformity and also threatens the notion that artistic expression can be conceived as an irreplaceable expression of personal originality.

In 1988, Jean Baudrillard asserted the post-modern syndrome of simulation stating that the age of simulation 'begins with the liquidation of all referentials ... simulation threatens the difference between 'true' and 'false', 'real' and 'imaginary' (Kearney 1989, p217)

"Everything is destined to reappear as simulation. Landscapes as photography, women as the sexual scenario, thoughts as writing, terrorism as fashion and the media events as television. Things seem to exist by virtue of this strange destiny. You wonder



whether the world itself isn't just here to serve as an advertisting copy in some other world" (Jean Baudrillard "America")

Such statements direct attention away from aesthetics to the nature of representation itself as the principal problem of our age. Since much of experience is mediated by images, the issue of how meaning is constructed through them has become central. Artists have also recognised that as our relationship to the visual world has changed and so has the role we assigned to art. This view of the post modern, declares there is no ulterior meaning to ideology, nothing to conceal or reveal, only the simulacrum. These images no longer reflect, negate, or transform reality as it bears no relation to any reality; it is its own pure simulacrum.

If we reflect the question of value and settle for a description (sociological, formalist etc) of a work and if we equate all cultures and cultural activities (ie Bach and Rock) then the historical evolution of art and artistic expression will lose its 'meaning' and turn into a conveyor belt of goods devoid of its own originality, become a regime of sameness. This blandness denies the realm of human possibilities, and of being and living in a world that is understood as possibilities. Yoko Ono's work exemplifies a wonderment and her events were motivated by setting a situation and allowing whatever to happen thereafter - "After unblocking one's mind, by dispensing with visual, auditory and kinetic perceptions, what will come out of us? Would there be anything? I wonder. And my events are mostly spent in wonderment" (from Grapefruit). She is motivated by a certain poetics of possibilities, using her own personal imagery but leaving it simple enough for



the viewer/reader to have their own personal dialogue with the work.

If we abandon this 'social' side of the imagination which presents open-ended goals that motivate a free variation of possible worlds then we are faced with a post-modernism which presents itself as a labyrinth of mirror images leading nowhere. E Ann Kaplan in her introduction to "Postmodernism and Its Discontents" (1988) warns of the emergence of a 'co-optive postmodernism' where the collapse of the distinction between the imaginary and the real, brought about by the omnipresent consumer technologies, suggests there is no way out - no possibility of critical transcendence - because no power to imagine things otherwise. She explains that "this postmodernism is described as radically transforming the subject through its blanketing of culture. Inside is no longer separate from outside; private space and public space, high-brow no longer contrasts to the popular. Technologies, marketing, and consumption create a new one dimensional world from where there is no space to mount a critical perspective. (Kearney 1989 p218)

The Fluxus movement used to be accused of 'goofing off', but the Fluxus approach offered a more open-ended approach and dialogue. By being non-elitist and proclaiming itself to be a rear guard action it despised the money-orientation of artistic enterprise. Fluxus essentially was expansive, tending to defy expectations and cross boundaries. And when Fluxus is fully situated in the complex cultural world of the 1960's and 1970's it will be valued especially for, as Beuys remarked, "it's provocative

statement, (which) should not be underestimated: it addresses all spontaneous forces in the spectator that can lead to the irritating question, 'What is this about?'" (Altshuler 1989 p 70)

Fluxus chose the ephemeral experience over the commodifiable art object, and the events were a challenge to the viewer to recalculate their own personal view thereby assisting in both a social and critical transcendence. Yoko Ono's esoteric approach invokes the power of memory, witness, and intuition, her work demands that the viewer remains open to what they are given from beyond their own personal sphere. In doing so she re-mythifies the imagination, and re-establishes its role, and introduces a sense of wonder into life.

The bronze recasts of her work appear to reject the ephemeral experience of the viewer and embrace the standard of the commodifiable art objects, yet somehow "bronze age" still sits uncomfortably with the blatant commodity approach of Koons and Warhol. Her work still emphasises the private experience of the viewer through their simplistic presentation. Her work relies on the power of the viewers imagination and intuition which is its own ephemeral experience.

Her work still embodies some of the Fluxus ideals. Fluxus was a product of its time and sought to reflect the transient mood of the 1960's. Fluxus also felt that art was being used to camouflage a visual and moral wasteland. Fluxus sought to neutralise the arrogance of art and the vulgarities of life. There is no posturing or cynacism. Yoko Ono's work has always reflected the humour,

trivialities, accidents and desperations of human life. This approach and content allows for an art that encourages a critical and social transcendence and thus engages in meaningful social praxis.



Conclusion

The trajectory of Yoko Ono's work emerges in the mid 1960's out of this complex totality of interdisciplinary endeavours. Her songs, performances, objects and films are distinguished by their direct focus on materials in a way that calls attention to the phenomenon of perception.

The distinct style of Ono's films is due not only to their 'conceptual' organisation but to the fact that each film originated as a visual idea first articulated in a brief written statement. Her Fluxus multiples display a mercurial wit, while her poetry in Grapefruit is precise, vivid, and has a refined sense of perspective.

Yoko Ono's art is gracefully situated between the physical and psychic. Her work focuses sharply on reality, isolating the most mundane, everyday detail from the complications and distractions of its original context.

Her performances speculate on invisible suffering, giving public voice to a personal private knowledge. Her work deals with the primary emotions, and contain deeply embedded convictions, and have an intuitive grasp on the subtlety of emotion.

Fluxus intended to bring art closer to the public and Yoko Ono is their best exponent of bringing art home, while maintaining controversial originality; her recordings brought 'avant garde' culture, political activism, and progressive design to High Street stores.



The goofing off approach of Fluxus should be comparable to the 'political ambidexterity' asserted by Postmodernism; yet Fluxus was a non-elitist, pro-social sensibility and postmodernism presents itself as both cynical and elitist as it trivialises human endeavour and emotion.

This political ambidexterity refuses to decide on the ethical difference between one view and another choosing instead endless media imagery and language games. This approach is like keeping a conversation going assuming the conversation itself is good; at this point not only does postmodernism appear laid back but laid low.

Postmodernism now lacks authority and belief as it has become more disestablished from reality. Postmodernism has reduced the imagination of the individual to a collectivist image of the mass media.

Bronze age is not an attempt to cash in on previous achievements. It is a remembrance that hints at the drive for the conquest of suffering and the permanence of joy. Her work gives operative existence to the schematizing power of the imagination to engage the viewer in their own personal dialogue with their own mythologies - mythologies which are based on own personal experience, and the simplistic presentation and Ono's personal approach to her own work invites response and engages easy dialogue.

It is too easy to dismiss Ono's work as naive and gauche especially when it is situated in the commercial '80's. Situated thus, her work voices a certain dissent in the face of the excessiveness of the pace of production of commodities and media manipulations.

Yoko Ono's approach works by witness and not by dogmatism, by intuition rather than by abstraction, this approach suggests the priority of testament over theory. Yoko Ono's work actively solicits a re-creative response from the viewer. This re-establishment of the poetic prowess of the creative imagination is a social necessity. It is this power of imagining that allows us to recast other ways of being in the world and other possibilities of existence.

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