

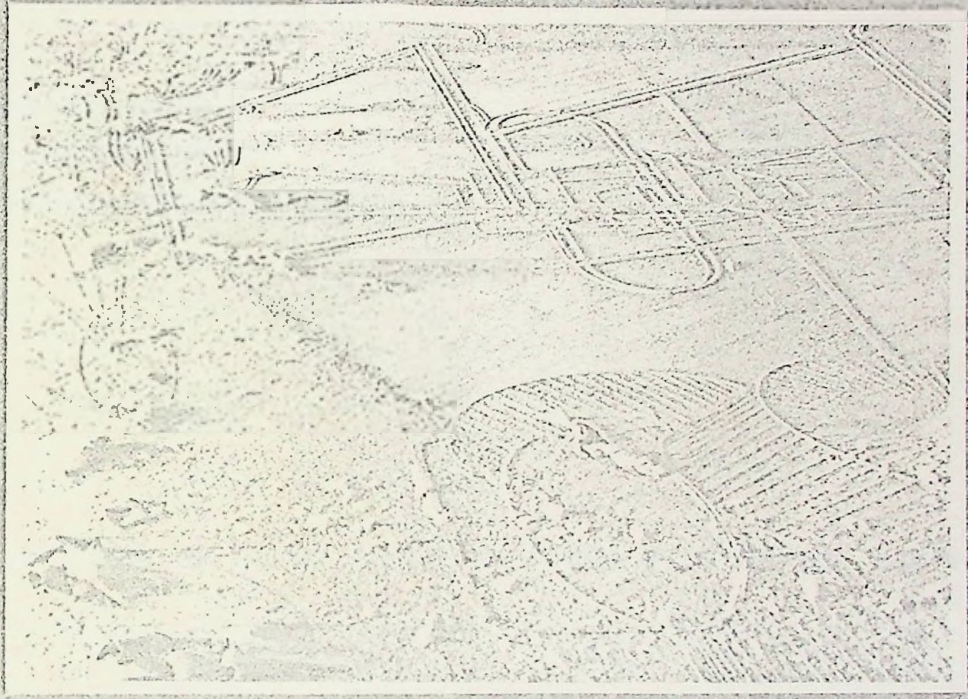


NEW WORKS IN
SHORT DURATION

THE RISE OF THE TEMPORARY
ARTWORK

BRENDA NEELER - 1977

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TENDER WORKS OF SHORT DURATION - THE RISE OF THE TEMPORARY ARTWORK

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77. HARRISON . LAGOON - SIMULATING MONSOON.

INTRODUCTION

My purpose in this dissertation is to show how the nature of sculpture has changed in the twentieth Century, by the redefinition of its characteristics, and by the expansion of its purpose - so that the temporary artwork is now a wholly accepted form of communication.



1. ARCHER FROM TEMPLE OF APHAIA AT AEGINA -
Beginning of 5th Cent. B.C. (Munich, Glyptothek)



2. METOPE 1 from side of Parthenon - (in situ)
probably by Phydias - centaur and man in combat.

SCULPTOR
SCULPTURE

n. an artist in carving
the act of carving, especially in stone;
extended to clay-modelling or moulding for
casting work, or a piece of wood, in this
kind: (obs.) engraving: shaping in relief:
(biol.) spines, ridges etc. standing out
from the surface .. to carve: to represent
in sculpture: to shape in relief: to mark
with sculpturings...

SCULPTURESQUE statue-like

(LATIN : sculptor, - oris, sculptura, sculpere, sculptum, to carve.)

ART

practical skill, or its application, guided
by principles: human skill and agency (opp. to
NATURE) : application of skill to production
of beauty (esp. visible beauty) and works of
creative imagination (as the fine arts) a
skilled profession or trade, craft or branch
of activity: magic or occult knowledge or
influence: a method of doing a thing: a knack:
contrivance: cunning: contrivance: artifice:
dexterous: clever: crafty conduct: a wile:



3. THE FARNESE BULL
Hellenistic 2nd Cent. B.C.
Museo Nazionale, Naples.



4. Bronze statuette of Negro Boy musician
Alexandria 1st Cent. B.C. 8" high - Paris Bibliotheque Nationale

VITTORIA - NEPTUNE WITH A SEAHORSE
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



5.

THE RAPE OF A SABINE WOMAN
Capodimonte Museum, Naples.



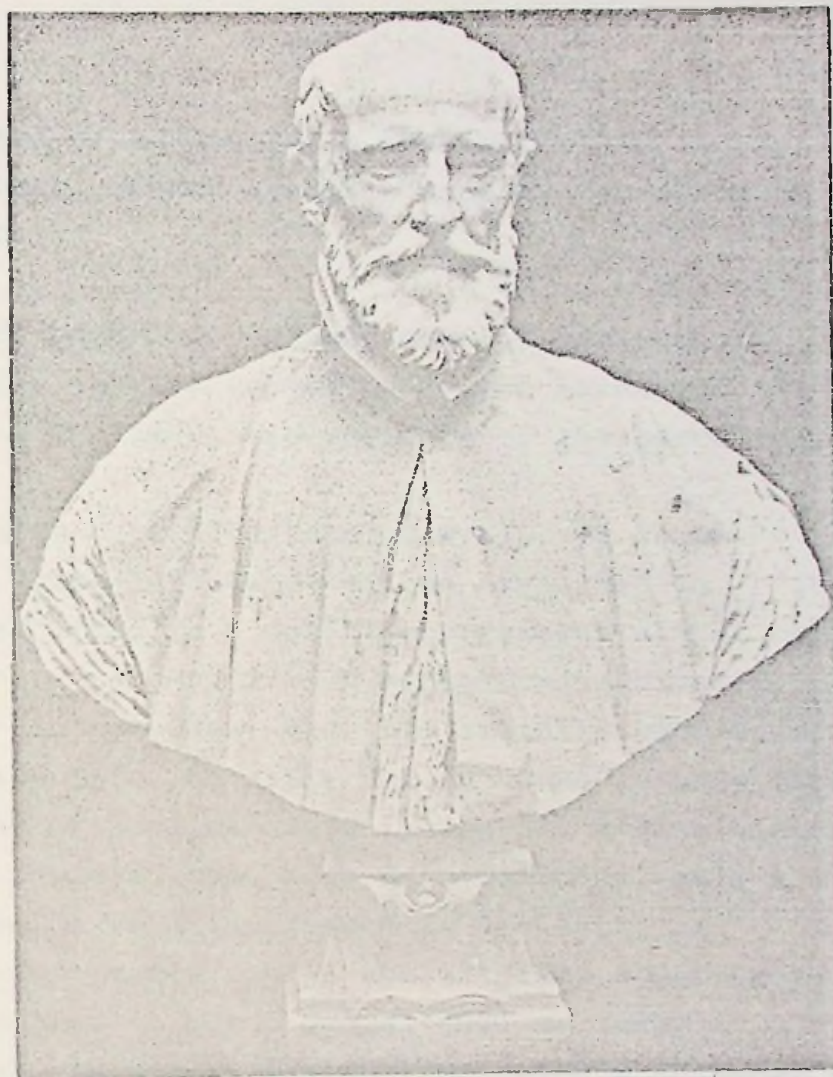
7.



6. Giovanni BOLOGNA Wax models for THE RAPE OF THE SABINES
Victoria and Albert Museum London

OBJECT n. a thing presented, or capable of being presented to the senses: a thing observed: a material thing: that which is thought of, regarded as being outside, different form, or independent of, the mind (opposed to SUBJECT): that upon which attention, interest, or some emotion is fixed: an oddity or some deplorable spectacle: that towards which action or desire is directed, an end: (SHAKESPEARE : presentation to view or to the mind).

From: CHAMBERS'S TWENTIETH CENTURY DICTIONARY, W&R CHAMBERS,
EDINBURGH.



TH
Ca

8. Gian Lorenzo BERNINI - MONSIGNOR FRANCESCO BARBERINI
National Gallery of Art, Washington.

From the definition of sculpture in Chambers's Dictionary: the carved, the cast, object has been made by man since he first expressed himself.

These objects had, probably, sacred, erotic, incantatory, memorial functions, varying according to the intent of the making artist, and the need, the approach of the perceiver.

I refer specifically to the context of sculpture since Christian in the Roman/European/American civilisation. The Roman city-dweller lived in a social environment almost completely similar to today's - concerned with establishing himself in life, with survival in the rat-race, with the infinite tangles of politics and family life, he preferred to spend leisure time, hard-won, watching or participating in sports, taking his ease with a drink, or a woman, and, very much as today, only a tiny number of people were interested in the arts, as patrons and/or appreciators, while the literary spectrum varied from historians to porno-hacks, just as today. Again, the role of the artist varied from being a designer of villas and landscapes, to laying terrazzo and copying marble, Greek statues ploughed up by peasants.

The Sculpture, however it was produced, played the same basic roles in the human life - the Lares and Penates, the household gods, the statue of the Virgin Mary - the bust of Beethoven on the piano. Then the memorial busts - standing in the atrium of the home - portraits to commemorate a moment in time, a person.

The monuments, to remind the citizen of power and conquest, on horse-back or standing in 'humble' toga.

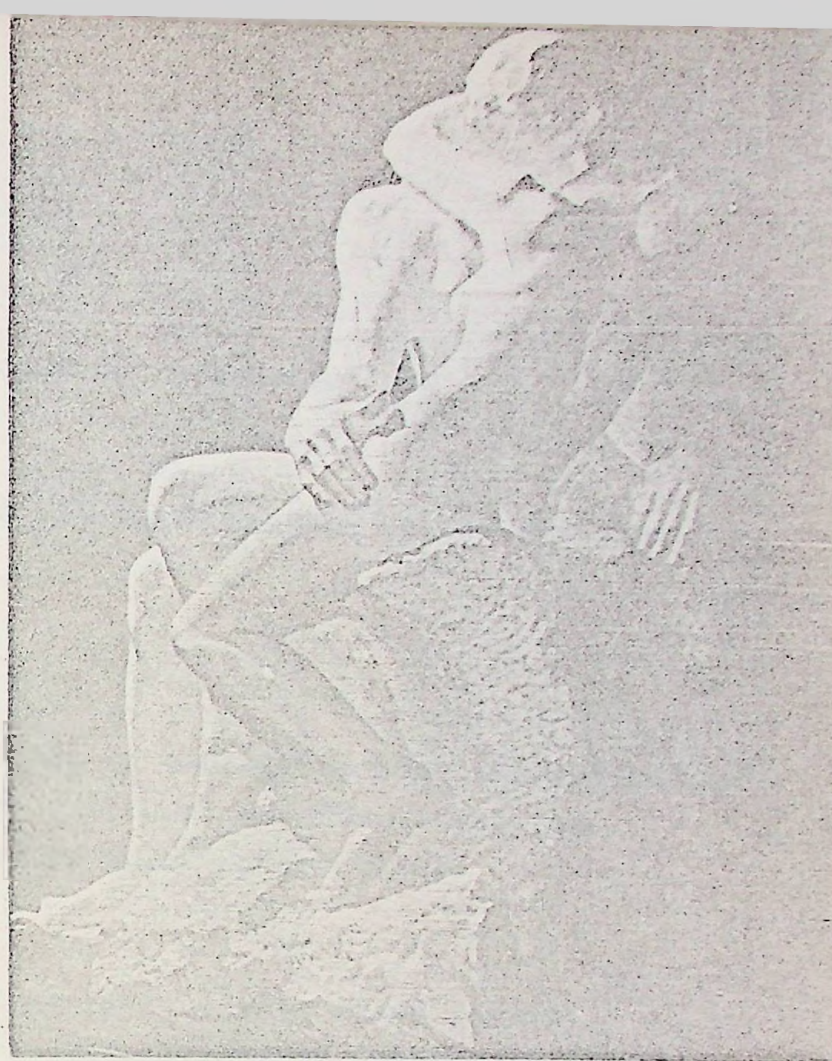
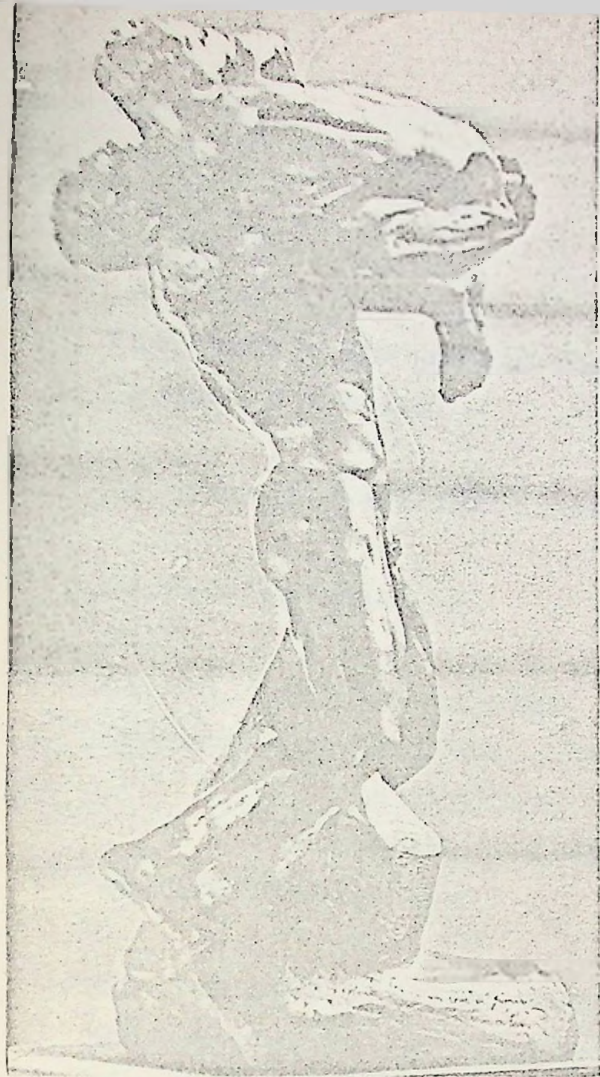
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The monuments, to remind the citizen of power and conquest, on horse-back or standing in 'humble' toga.



8A RODIN - I AM BEAUTIFUL 1882 Bronze
30" X 16" X 12" Rodin Museum, Paris

10. RODIN - THE KISS 1886



9. RODIN - THE BURGHERS OF CALAIS 1884-1886 Bronze
82½" X 55" X 75" Museum of Art Philadelphia

The 'nude': the erotic disguised by 'aesthetic' and 'symbolic meaning'.

The common characteristics of all these Western sculptures are:-

Representational

Solid

Carved, modelled or cast

Freestanding (reliefs, panels etc. I exclude as more decorative in function than sculpture therefore occupying space, and demanding space around them).

Static, Unchanging.

The sculptor involved himself entirely within these limits, with mastering the problems of observation, of pre-vision of the desired form, of handling the material to arrive at the result. In so doing, he considered the problems of:-

Size, scale (determined by the eventual role of the piece, economics and practicality)

Position (mainly disregarded except for monuments to be placed in specific relation to architecture)

Choice of model

Choice of Attitude/Pose

Choice of Material Usually the sculptor specialized in carving OR modelling/casting - almost always stone, therefore or clay/wax for bronze or gold.

The touchstone for good sculpture was the legend of Pygmalion - when the Sculptor, because of his great skill, became the creator of Life, yet the essential aim of the sculptor was to make eternal work - the worst that could happen a stone monument was to be broken with sledges, the bronze casting could be remelted into cannon. Yet the marble statue, the bronze figure, last longer than iron swords or golden jewellery, buried in the earth, or under the sea. The iron rusts away to nothing, the gold is robbed and recycled speedily.

11. RODIN - BALZAC IN DRESSING GOWN 1892

43" X 17" X 19"



12. RODIN - BALZAC IN DRESSING GOWN 1892

43" X 17" X 19"



13. RODIN - THE DRESSING GOWN 1893-1895 Plaster

59" X 26" X 16" Rodin Museum

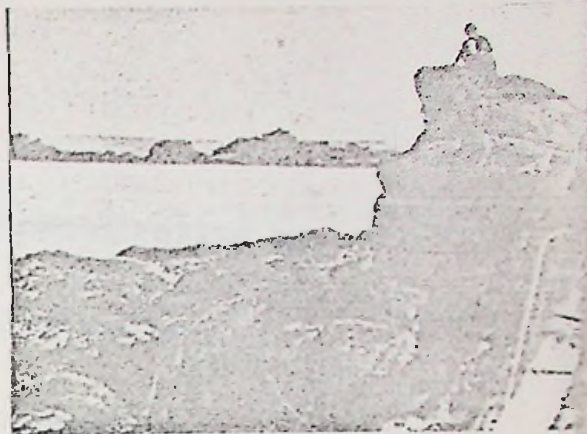
So right to the time of Rodin, the last great master of traditional sculpture, the statue remained within these limits. Sculptural presence as strong as that of his work, still demanded, and demands, that the spectator step back, look, study, contemplate, analyse, and look again at the skilfulness of his modelling of the surface of the statue, the verisimilitude of the musculature - yet, this distancing, which has to protect the work from the lie, the fundamental contradiction of the translation of living flesh into cold, hard stone or metal, of the petrification of life, forbids the spectator to TOUCH the illusion. Thus the statue worked AGAINST itself as the vehicle for the idea, the emotion, reducing its potential communication.

The most significant aspect of this long tradition was that it concealed any reference in the material to its humble origins in the rock, in the earth - the image and its execution were all.

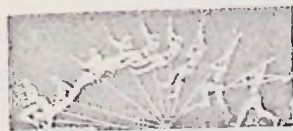
Part of the illusion of perception was that working drawings, clay and wax models, scribbles and sketches, were not regarded as anything but information - useful only to the student-artist to learn about working methods. The market in these was almost certainly entirely between the artists until the Eighteenth Century, when Renaissance Drawings were purchased by Gentlemen on the Grand Tour, under the guidance of their artists and scholar-tutors.

The statue itself was the whole, eternal, art of object. It represented, by the end of the 19th Century, all forms of domination. By Kings, Queens and Generals of society
Of one country by another
Of women by men
Of real human bodies by classical, idealized nudes
Of sexuality by idealized embraces
Of motion by pertified, frozen gesture
Of thought by rational rules

14. VICTOR HUGO photographed by Vacquerie in 1855
the year he moved to Guernsey



15. RODIN - MONUMENT TO VICTOR HUGO 1909



16. Jules Etienne MAREY - CHRONOPHOTOGRAPH 1890

Of the vast masses of Europe and America by exploitation by
power structures
Of the hard work of Sculpture by the Idealized perfect
surface result
Of life and death, of change, by sentimental mourning.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHANGE

The end of the 19th Century, due to vast population movements, from Europe to the New World, the speedy transit offered by railroads and steamships, the telegraph - the forging ahead of technical invention, the excitement of trying to fly, to record the voice, to speak instantly over the telephone, the possibilities of social mobility - the NEW AGE - produced a new philosophy, and almost simultaneously a New Art.

The new thinking of the age owed debts to the opening of Japan to the West in the late 19th Century, the ideas of Zen Buddhism having new relevance to the thinking of Henri Bergson, whose philosophies link Heraclitus with Einstein's physics.*

* Henri Bergson Born in Paris 1859. Degree in 1881, taught in provincial schools and in Paris. 1889 published TIME AND FREE WILL. Lectureship at the Ecole Normale. 1903 INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS set out all his most important ideas. "Analysis can go on ad infinitum, by using concepts. There are no concepts in reality, IT IS. Analysis expresses reality in terms of the function of other things". Long lists of publications, long and honoured history of teaching and lecturing. 1940 The Vichy Government offered him exemption from the Jewish Laws but he resigned from the College de France, and died the next year. Most particularly Bergson concerned himself with the question of time, and of reality.



17. DUCHAMP - NUDE DESCENDING A STAIRCASE NO 1 1911



18. DUCHAMP - SAD YOUNG MAN IN A TRAIN 1911



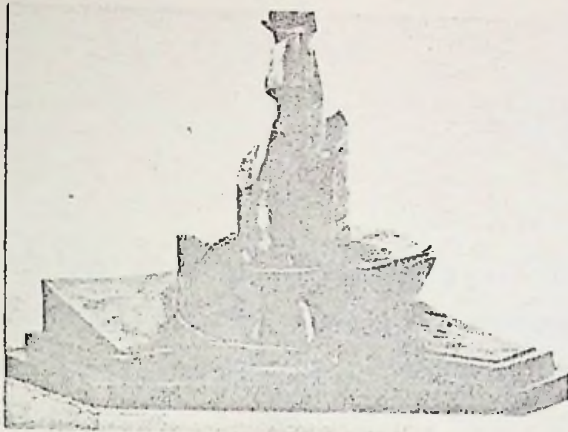
19. Giacomo BALLA DYNAMISM OF A DOG ON A LEASH 1912

He pointed out that concepts are only concepts, and are not reality, that events are not clear cut, that time flows as a stream, and is not as the rational imposition of man-made time would have it, a series of one-second intervals. He pointed out how time can change, how our perception of time, of objects, of contexts, is infinitely variable, depending on the individual experience brought to the context.

He foreshadowed the discovery that energy, the electron, is not a charge in a particle, but the alternation of the particle between energy state and matter state.

He forced, or rather seduced his legendary powers as a clear lecturer, the public - a far wider than philosophy normally attracted in Paris or London - to turn upside down the ideas of positivism, of Newtonian physics, of pace of life and events. A typical Bergson analogy shows how classic ways of studying anything were shown to be attempts at capturing a stream, by taking a mug of water from it. Bergson, in his lectures and books, enlarged on the philosophy of Heraclitus, which had been a mere curiosity since Roman times. Heraclitus flourished in Ephesus about 500 B.C. He is known to most who have heard his name for a statement probably not his at all, "All things are in a state of flux". - Certainly he did say "you cannot step twice into the same river, for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you" - Plato quotes this, and Aristotle describes Heraclitus' doctrine as affirming that "all things are in motion, nothing steadfastly is". More particularly, Heraclitus above all believed in the necessity of the conflict of opposites to generate the whole, the One. "Men do not know how what is at variance agrees with itself. It is an attunement of opposite tensions, like that of the bow and the lyre" (the two instruments which measured the warrior's skill).

Heraclitus fixed on Fire as the essential nature of Reality - "it is all things in a state of tension, of strife, of consuming, of constantly going out and of kindling. Change is the upward path and the downward path and the cosmos comes



20. Umberto BOCCIONI DEVELOPMENT OF A BOTTLE IN SPACE 1912



21. Carlo CARRA SIMULTANEITY - THE WOMAN ON THE BALCONY 1912



24.

24. BOCCIONI - STUDY FOR HEAD + HOUSE + LIGHT 1912



22.



23.

22. BALLA - LITTLE GIRL RUNNING ON A BALCONY
23. BOCCIONI - ELASTICITY

into being in virtue of this. When fire is condensed it becomes moist, and under compression it turns to water: water being congealed is turned to earth, and this he calls the downward path. And again, the earth is liquified and from it water comes, and from that everything else: for almost everything then refers to the evaporation from the sea. This is the upward path". (Coplestone: History of Philosophy Chap. V).

To account for the relative stability of things, he described a constant exchange between Fire and matter - so that while the substance of each kind of matter is always changing, the aggregate quantity of that kind of matter remains the same.

Henri Bergson, working at the end of the Nineteenth Century after Christ, saw how method, scientific research and systematic investigation seemed to many to provide an admirable model for the world of mankind to live by, and to continue to explore the planet and the heavens. Yet somehow many people were dissatisfied with the improvement and extension of the social pattern of Judeao-Christianity, Victorian Christianity, hence the Arts and Crafts movements, the looking towards Japanese aesthetics, Impressionism and the Cult of the Noble Savage. Bergson, while valuing enormously the rational scientific investigation of the world, sought to provide a counterbalance and a deeper understanding of our perceptions of our existence. Grids and rules, formulae and patterns, the whole teleological approach was invalid when it seemed unable to cope with sensation and instinct.

Bergson in many years of work, concerned himself with areas such as time, instinct, knowing and perception, change and metamorphosis. His ELAN VITAL became the life force of the Vitalists (Hepworth, Arp). His INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS was translated by Hulme in 1913, when his work was well established in the Wuropean contemporary mind, and directly caused the establishment of the Vorticists in England.



25. Marcel DUCHAMP - NUDE DESCENDING A STAIRCASE No.3 1912



26. BOCCIONI - UNIQUE FORMS IN SPACE 1913

Herbert Read was a confirmed Bergsonist, on the theme of intuition and life force, but very much of his influence on Moore, Hepworth, centered on the relationship between the sculptor and the material "entering into the knowing with hand and mind and eye and soul" - he ignored the deeper implications of Bergson's philosophy.

The Futurists were the first major art movement to take up Bergson's teachings - especially on motion and matter, on music and memory, on the senses, and on the constant interchange of energy and matter - how we enter into and are entered into by our surroundings.

1900

The new century was a time of ferment and questioning in all the arts and in the sciences. Different movements sprang up - cross fertilized and bred - their first protagonistists moving from city to city in the pre-War Europe - meeting and fighting - printing manifestoes and having their exhibitions stormed by rival parties or police. The art exploded in all directions questioning form and content, materials and execution. The First World War had a profound effect on the magnificent energy of the new century - many artists were killed - the Russian Revolution gradually closed Russia from the West - and the horrific Post War Depression slowed down the progress of artistic change. But this permitted absorption and development of certain of the new ideas in Europe and in America.

In 1908 Paris was the art Capital of the World - the year that Matisse rejected all of Braque's paintings from the Salon d'Automne - saying that he had reduced everything to Cubes - which was the phrase that rallied the painters for a good decade or more.



28. FUTURIST WORKS - including SEVERINI'S - PORTRAIT OF MARINETTI

26. BOCCIONI - MUSCLES IN SPEED 1913

SEVERINI - PARTY IN MONTMARTRE 1913

SEVERINI - FROM NOTHING TO THE REAL

UGO GIANNATTASIO - THE TURNSTILE 1913

FUTURISM

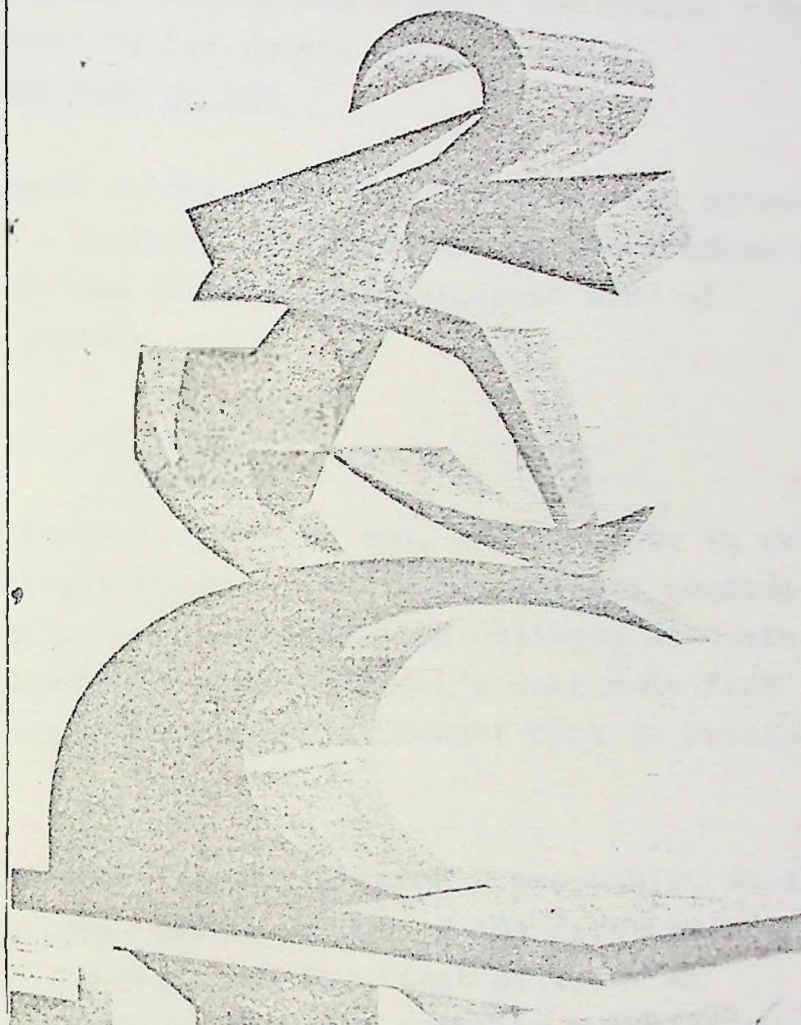
Far more important for Sculpture, and for art to-day, was the publication in February 1909, in French, on the front cover of LE FIGARO of the FUTURIST MANIFESTO. On the same day, 20th February, hundreds of copies, in Italian, were sent to leading figures all over Italy. Between then and 1914, over a dozen further manifestos were published, and countless articles were published in the European Press. All through the period there were Futurist demonstrations, performances, exhibitions in galleries and theatre in towns throughout Italy, and in Paris, London, Berlin, Brussels, Amsterdam, Munich, Rotterdam, Moscow, and Petrograd (Leningrad).

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti studied at the Sorbonne, and most particularly the philosophy of Bergson. His close friend at this time was Alfred Jarry. 'The essential elements of our poetry will be courage, audacity and revolt. We wish to exalt too aggressive movement, feverish insomnia, running, the perilous leap, the cuff, the blow'.*

Speed, movement, the motor car, the train, - the capture of the spirit of the Age - the past was past - museums were cemeteries - the splendour of the world has been enriched by a new form of beauty, the beauty of speed.

The big problem, after the enthusiastic reception of the energetic ideas of Futurism, was to make the art which would express these states, these new exaltations, this reality of modern life. The painters struggled hard with representations of mobility - Boccioni the sculptor succeeded best with his elegant visual demonstrations of abstraction of lines of forces, of movement, of states of being. The Futurist performances, the poetry readings and events, reached a Dionysiac state, which was where

* Futurist Manifestos



29. BALLA - LINEE FORZA DEL PUGNO DI BOCCIONI 1915
(Realised 1968)

Marinetti was aiming the rest of art - where the Artist - not just already set apart by his power, energy, vision, actually BECOMES THE WORK OF ART.

Certainly many aspects of Futurism, the violence, the aggression, the cry for war as a purifier, are seen now as the seedbed of Fascism, but then it was thought the healthiest wind of change in the new century.

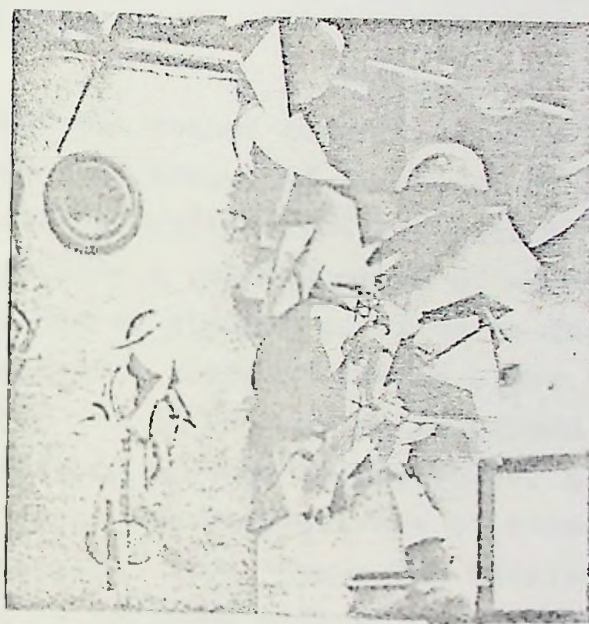
AND RUSSIA

The Russians were frequent visitors too, and students in Paris. The Futurist activities in Paris were more inclined towards the concrete art object - the poetry word collages of Carra, Marinetti's typographical poems, Boccioni's work made from scrap materials, maquettes, were all brought back to Russia as possibilities.

Malevich, painted his way rapidly through a pro-Cubist style to a fragmented collage, and he developed the first paintings 'without a subject'. He showed the first of these at TRAMWAY V, the first Russian Futurist painting exhibition, held in Petersburg in February 1915. He proclaimed his Suprematist system in December 1915 at the second exhibition "0.10". He wrote: "in naming some of these paintings, I do not wish to point out what form to seek in them, but I wish to indicate that real forms were approached, in many cases, as the ground for formless painterly masses, from which a painterly picture was created, quite unrelated to nature".

TATLIN on the other hand, often Malevich's bitter rival, yet devoted follower and student of his work, had been a sailor, and a part-time painter, before he made a trip to Paris in 1913. He tried to stay with Picasso as an apprentice, but had to return to Moscow without success. However, he saw some

30. TATLIN, ^{YAKULOV}~~YAKENKOV~~ AND RODCHENKO - A CORNER OF THE CAFE
PITTORESQUE Moscow 1917



of the little constructions Picasso had made from bits of rubbish - and probably also received the key Bergson idea which had been taken up by the Futurists:

"Does not the fiction of an isolated object imply some kind of absurdity, since this object borrows its physical properties from the relations which it maintains with all others, and owes each of its determinations, and consequently its very existence, to the place which it occupies in the universe as a whole?"
(BERGSON MATTER & MEMORY 1910).

Tatlin started to make his corner constructions - he was using 'real' materials - he used tin, wood, iron, glass, plaster. In a 1914 piece he used a 'cylindrical tin with its label still attached, supporting a jointed piece of wood on one side, and a thin painted piece of plywood is fixed to the other. Between the two is wedged a piece of jagged glass. Thrust up behind these is a thin rod of wood which is capped by a square piece of iron, in its turn screwed to the rough, slightly curved plank, which forms the play-surface of these various rough shapes and materials" from "Gray: The Russian Experiment in Art" p182. Then he followed with his constructions, many of which appeared to be flying in space, although actually suspended by wire. - "He created a new spatial form: a continually intersecting rhythm of planes whose movements jut into, cleave, embrace, block and skewer space".

From then until approximately 1922, the artists, Tatlin, Malevich, Kandinsky, El Lissitzky, Gabo, Pevsner, first played an important role in the revolution, as animators and as activists. "We do not need a dead mausoleum of art where dead works are worshipped, but a living factory of the human spirit - in the streets, in the tramways, in the factories, workshops and workers' homes" (Mayakovsky; Winter Palace 1918).

They succeeded in setting up museums of their art all over the country, and reorganizing the art schools according to a programme based on their principle of abstract art -

31. AGITATION INSTRUCTION TRAIN 'THE RED COSSACK'

CLEAR
PHOTO UNAVAILABLE



32. RED STAR AGITATIONAL BOAT

Malevich threw Chagall out of the school where he taught. They took charge of the decoration of the streets for the Mayday and October Revolution parades, and organised pageants for thousands of citizens, in order to inspire the Revolutionary fervour. The most striking of these was the re-enactment of the storming of the Winter Palace.

Tatlin and others started to design more lasting works, once the War was over and the Revolution won (Tatlin's monument stands in several cities in the West in the hopefully reconstructed maquette but the necessity for political stability gradually drove the artists to leave Russia for the West. With them they brought the many more innovations in form and in thought that they had worked out in the safer world of the art schools they had controlled in the early Twenties.

1920 NAUM GABO/ANTOINE PEVSNER: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

The Brothers Gabo and Pevsner, both sculptors, wrote in Moscow in 1920 the Realist Manifesto, in which they laid down basic principles of Constructivism, which exercised a powerful influence especially on post-war Russian architecture (Tatlin, the brothers Vesnin, Lissitzky). Gabo and Pevsner are concerned with constructions in space, which, however, are interpreted primarily not as architecture, but as sculpture. An important part is played in their conceptions by haptic and optic charms arising out of the combination of various materials in these spatial constructions. These materials are without exception those produced industrially.

1. We reject the closed spatial circumference as the plastic expression of the moulding of space. We assert that space can only be modelled from within outwards in its depth, not from without inward through its volume. For what else is absolute space than a unique, coherent, and unlimited depth?
2. We reject the closed mass as an exclusive element for the building up of three-dimensional and architectonic bodies in space. In opposition to it we set the demand that plastic bodies shall be constructed stereometrically.
3. We reject decorative colour as a painterly element in three-dimensional construction. We demand that the concrete material shall be employed as a painterly element.
4. We reject the decorative line. We demand of every line in the work of art that it shall serve solely to define the inner directions of force in the body to be portrayed.
5. We are no longer content with the static elements of form in plastic art. We demand the inclusion of time as a new element and assert that real movement must be employed in plastic art, in order to make possible the use of kinetic rhythms in a way that is not merely illusionistic.

The enormous changes in the art, especially the sculpture, of this period, is clear in the photographs of the 1920 exhibition of the Obmokhu Group, The Society of Young Artists.

Rodchenko was making hanging mobiles, then these works, by his students, were examining the space within the sculpture, the relationship to the floor, the dynamics of support, the contrasts of materials, rhythms and proportions. The proposal of Constructivism however carried these experiments further - but to the regions of abstraction where Malevich had led, "let us cease our speculative activity (painting pictures) and take over the healthy bases of art - colour, line, materials

and forms - into the field of reality, of practical construction (from CONSTRUCTIVISM by Alexei Gan 1922).

So the emotional tempestuous ideas of the Futurists were being carried forward to a new art, in a way that they could not have conceived.

1919 sees people and ideas on the move

FUTURISM

CUBISM

VORTICISM

CONSTRUCTIVISM

THE GREAT WAR AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

CUBISM

ARTISTS LEAVE RUSSIA

*

BRANCUSI

HOLLAND

PARIS

GERMANY WEIMAR

Gropius Moholy Nagy

*Kandinsky

* CHAGALL

* ElLissitsky

*SOUTINE

1918 'DE STIJL': MANIFESTO I

The famous first manifesto of the De Stijl group, the full importance of which can only now be assessed, appeared in November 1918 and introduced the second year of the periodical of the same name. A year earlier a group of radical artists had been formed in Leyden under the leadership of Theo van Doesburg (b. 1883 in Utrecht, d. 1931 in Davos). Their goal: the organic combination of architecture, sculpture and painting in a lucid, elemental, unsentimental construction. The group took the name 'De Stijl', thereby stating quite precisely that their constructive doctrine was aimed at a new aesthetic. The first word was 'purity'; a 'white' world was to replace the 'brown' one.

1. There is an old and a new consciousness of the age. The old one is directed towards the individual. The new one is directed towards the universal. The struggle of the individual against the universal may be seen both in the world war and in modern art.
2. The war is destroying the old world with its content: individual predominance in every field.
3. The new art has brought to light that which is contained in the new consciousness of the age: a relationship of equality between the universal and the individual.
4. The new consciousness of the age is prepared to realize itself in everything, including external life.
5. Tradition, dogmas, and the predominance of the individual stand in the way of this realization.
6. Therefore the founders of the new culture call upon all who believe in reform of art and culture to destroy these obstacles of development, just as in the plastic arts - by doing away with natural form - they have eliminated that which stood in the way of pure artistic expression, the logical conclusion of every artistic concept.
7. The artists of today, all over the world, impelled by one and the same consciousness, have taken part on the spiritual plane in the world war against the domination of individualism, or arbitrariness. They therefore sympathise with all who are fighting spiritually or materially for the formation of an international unity in life, art, and culture.
8. The organ De Stijl, founded for this purpose, seeks to contribute towards setting the new conception of life in a clear light. The collaboration of all is possible by:- Sending in (to the editorial board) as a proof of agreement the (exact) name, address and profession.

Contributions in the broadest sense (critical, philosophical, architectural, scientific, literary, musical etc. as well as reproductions) to the monthly magazine De Stijl.

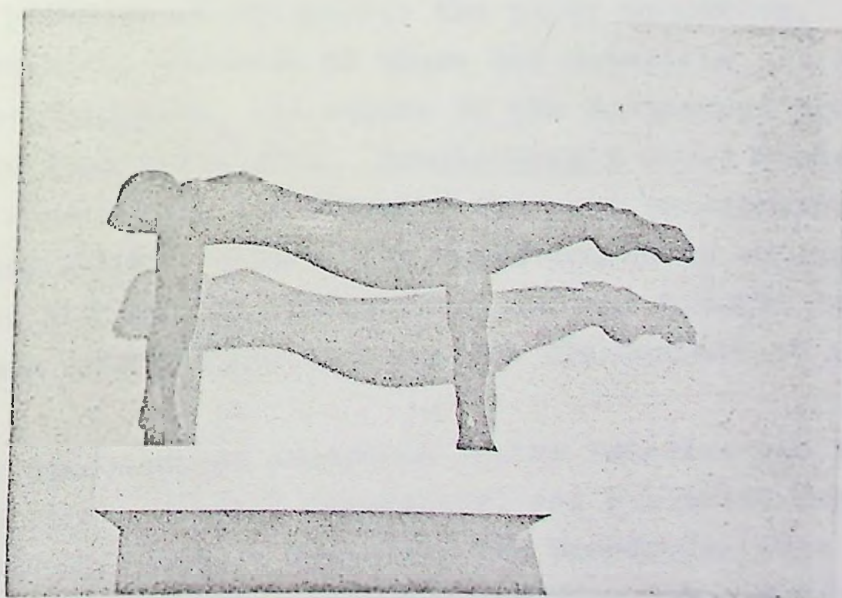
Translation into other languages and propogation of the views published in De Stijl.

Signatures of the contributors:-

Theo van Doesburg, painter/ Robt. van Hoff, architect/

Vilmos Huszar, painter/ Antony Kok, painter/ Piet Mondrian, painter/

G. Vantongerloo, sculptor/ Han Wils, architect.



35. Alexander CALDER HORSE 1928
Museum of Modern Art, New York

PHOTO
B. KELLIHER
NEW YORK 197

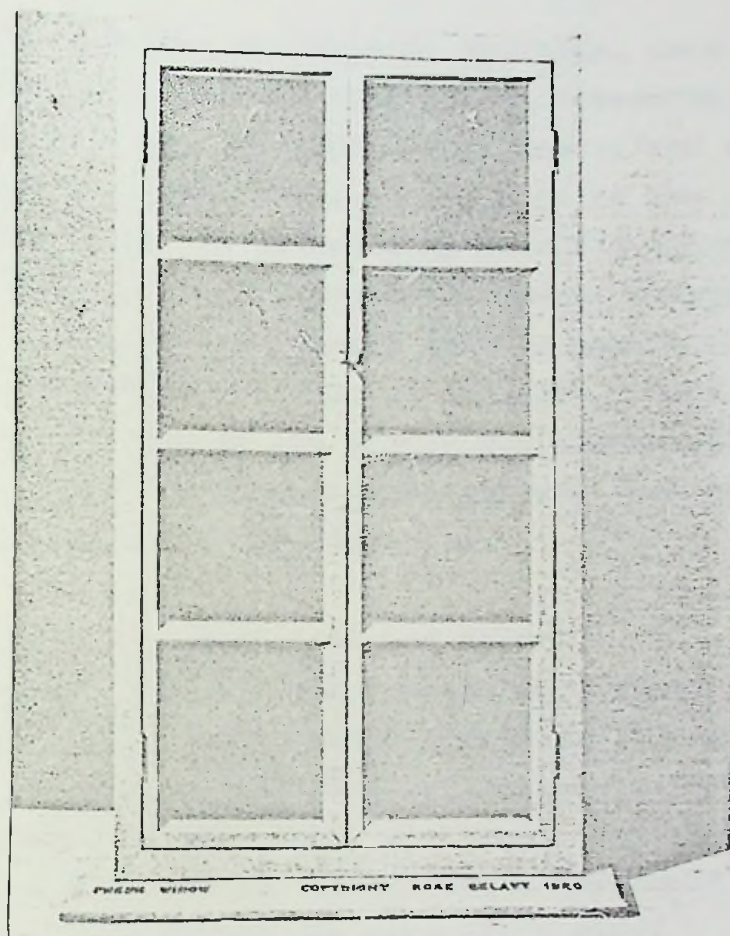
AFTER 'THE WAR TO END WARS'

The Twenties and Thirties are an age, in retrospect, when order, method, and understanding were being desperately sought after, due to the horrific psychological and physical damage of the War, and the dreadful social conditions, especially in Europe. The Bauhaus at Weimar, a haven for certain of the disillusioned Russians, sought to be a place of experiment and creativity, based on sound knowledge of craftsmanship - it certainly became the breeding ground for abstraction, for the architecture of the box - of mechanical process and colour, for logic and reason in the arts and in design.

There was no real innovations made in form in the arts - but much technical perfecting of hasty experiment made in Russia - or suggested by the Futurists - complexity was shunned, emotion abhorred - but the mental and technical discipline brought the earlier conceptual innovations to fulfilment.

In sculpture, the experimentation with materials started by Tatlin, the constructions in space, the hanging mobiles, the analytic profiles of Rodchenko, the paper maquettes, the mathematical measures of space and materials all lead to the re-alienation, the return to the Sculptural presence of the old figurative art. Moholy-Nagy's Cloud Projections and Film Experiments are probably the most interesting * part of the Bauhaus work. The basic course is employed or adapted in all Western Art Schools, and was brought to America by refugees from Hitler's Germany. (in the context of this thesis).

The other direction of Sculpture in the Twenties and Thirties, beside 'Kitsch', Fascist Figurative, and Stalinist Figurative was the Vitalist one. Following the Bergsonian idea of Growth and Form, in England Moore and Hepworth, in France Arp, went deeper in abstraction but kept to the solid form, with perhaps one hole pierced to demonstrate volume.



33. DUCHAMP - FRESH WIDOW 1920
Museum of Modern Art, New York

DADA

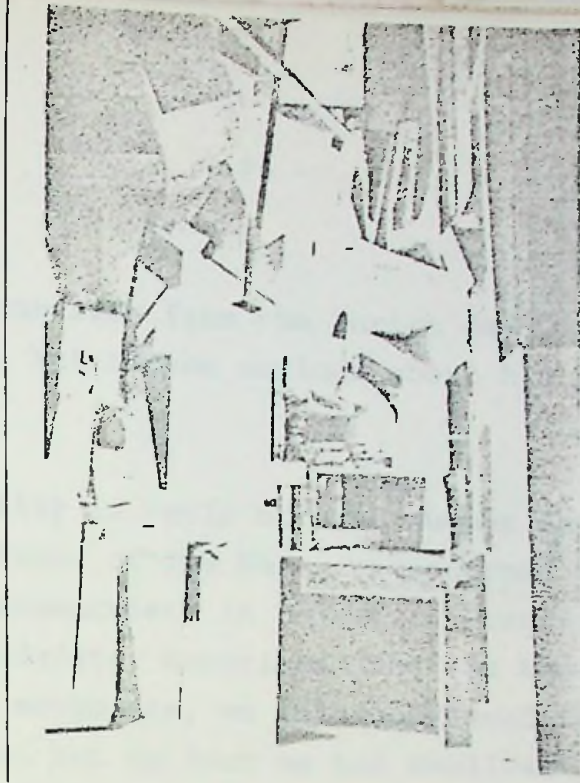
While the main, constructive, avant-garde energies, were directed, in all the West, towards abstraction, research, "The other art"? so fiercely demanded by Marinetti and the Futurists, surfaced in awkward ways, so opposite to the whole stream of abstraction, that it gained many converts among the common people.* Dada and Surrealism used common, everyday things, in uncommon ways, to provide the fierce jolt to reason that would allow the imagination release. Much of this art, above all Dali's, was erotic, and much of the erotic was pretty well obscene, though in a less vicious and bitter way than the work of the German painters of the Twenties.

A statement by Boccioni in about 1912 had said:

'even twenty different materials can compete in a single work to effect plastic emotion...glass, wood, cardboard, iron, cement, horsehair, leather, cloth, mirrors, electric lights etc.' He had attempted HEAD + LIGHT with real iron, a bun or real hair but the skills were not sufficiently developed - his better works had been in the one material - clay.

The original Dada was nothing but Futurism without the conviction in the future of speed and machinery. It was negative, anti-art. Much Dada was similar to student disruptive activity as practiced in Fasching Carnival in Germany since time immemorial - but directed as anti-art in a gesture of hopelessness - starting in Zurich in 1915. At the 1920 Dada fair in Berlin, a dead pig in Prussian soldiers uniform hung from the ceiling. The Berlin Dada leader was a youth, Johannes Baader, declared by the police to be criminally irresponsible, after causing disruption to the founding session of the Reichstag.

* Surrealism became a word in common use.



34. Kurt SCHWITTERS - THE FIRST MERZBAU 1923



40. SCHWITTERS - The third MERZBAU 1948

Little of import survives from the Zurich days, Arp was involved, for fun, but became serious about his painting and sculpture.

The focus of activity in Paris brought humour and a fresher reaction to the trauma of the War - unconcerned with the Constructivists' researchers in Weimar. Hans Richter, one of the original Dadaists, describes best the whole driving force "Like all newborn movements, we were convinced that the world began anew with us, but in fact we had swallowed Futurism - bones, feathers and all". Marinetti contributed to CABARET VOLTAIRE, the first Dada brochure from Zurich in 1916, and he and Tristan Tzara remained in close contact. The Dada soiree at the Cabaret Voltaire with the poetry readings of Bruitist poetry (Noise) was just like Futurist entertainments. The Dadaists distributed the Futurist manifestoes, employed their typographical devices, and photomontages. Hans Richter volunteers that this use was basically no more than a correct application of the "Realistic" Futurist principle of assembling suggestive documentary items, to produce an all-embracing dynamic pattern of the interpenetrating aspects of reality". The most striking similarity carried forward by Dadaism, however, was the desire to shock and do violence to bourgeois sensibilities.

THE IDEA OF INSTALLATION

To SCHWITTERS must go the credit for the first art environment - art-work. The German artist is identified with his Merz-bilds, large canvasses with cut-out pieces of what is variously known as Schweinerei, Drech, junk and bits of cardboard, built into compositions of brilliant originality, but principally with his Merzbau. The first one began in Hanover - Schwitters-saule (Schwitters-spine) with grew and grew until it became the whole room. The word Merz came to be used for all this work when he cut a piece of newspaper for a collage - COMERZ und PRIVATBANK -. He fled the Nazis, first to Norway, finally to England, working wherever he lived on his idea of



EXPOSITION
INTERNATIONALE
DU
SURREALISME

(JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1938)



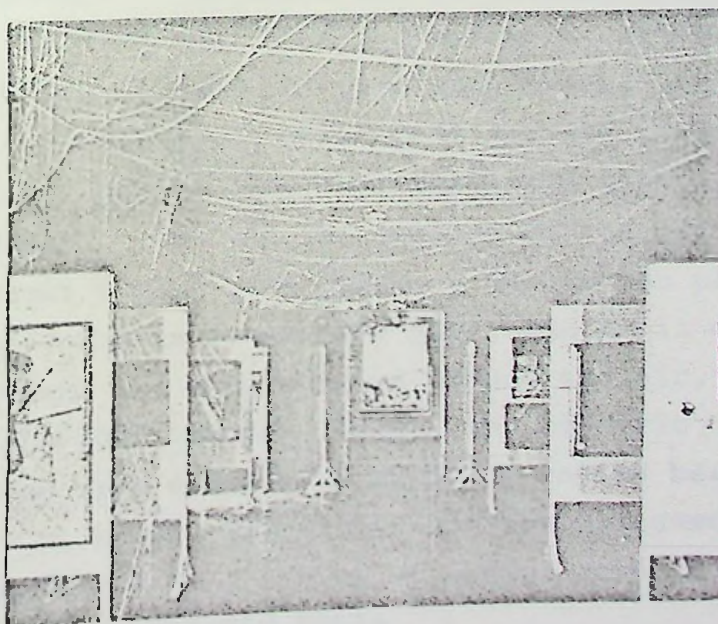
ORGANISME D'ART ET D'EXPOSITIONS

10, rue de Valenciennes

PARIS - FRANCE

TELEPHONE: 2-10-10

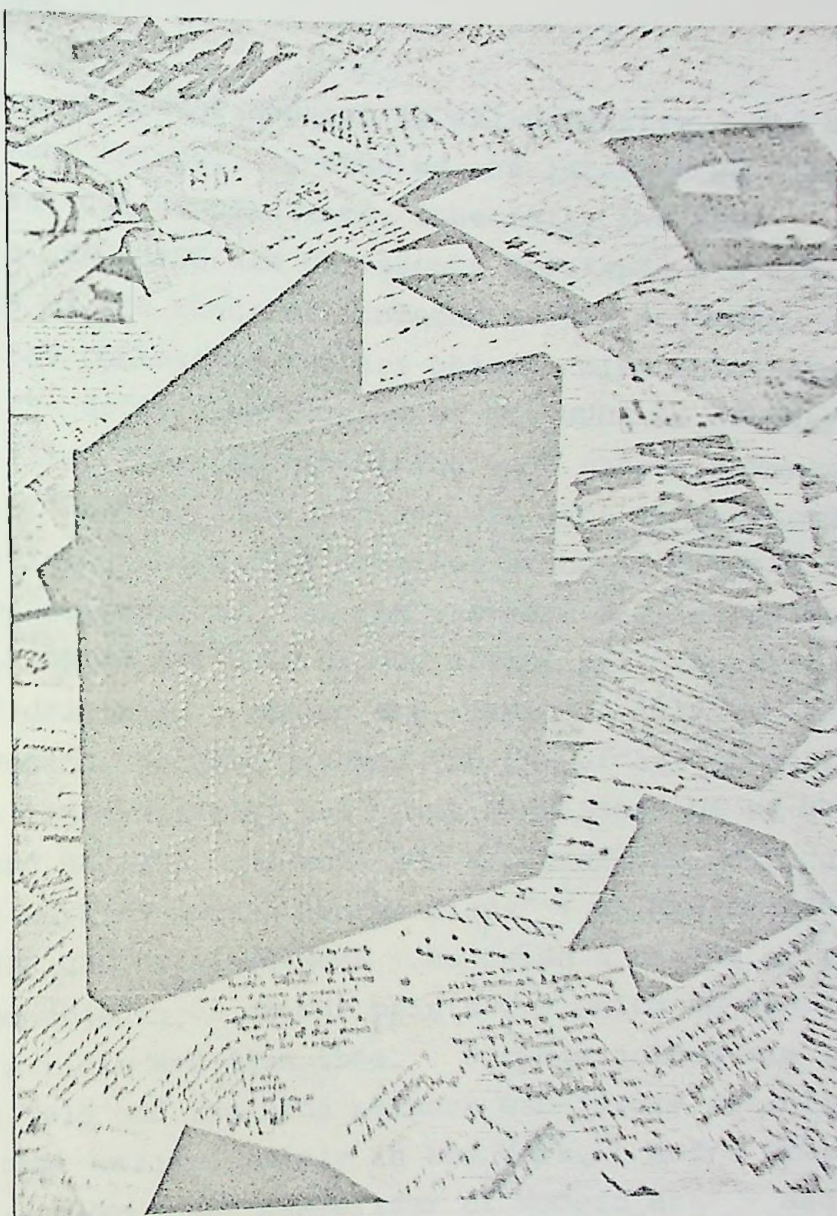
36. DUCHAMP - 1200 COAL BAGS SUSPENDED FROM A CEILING OVER
A STOVE January, 1938 Paris



38. DUCHAMP - 16 MILES OF STRING 1942
International Surrealists Exhibition New York

a MERZ-GESAMT WELTBILD - a world-embracing MERZ picture. He made use of snatchy peices of prose in poetry, or rubbish images in paintings, deliberately choosing inferior or bad 'materials', but to create works of art.

DALI, in his alteration of reality, both by his own costumes, and his surreal lifestyle, made enormous changes in the possibilities of sculpture - which were basically not realised until after the trauma of the Second World War. But he kept independent of the often rigid political theoretical codifications of the Surrealists. Max Ernst had held two scandalous exhibitions, in Cologne and in Paris in 1920. The Cologne show was entered through a mens urinal. The exhibition was opened by a young girl in a First Communion Dress reciting obscene verses. An axe hanging from one of the exhibits invited the visitor to destroy it if he didn't like it. - By 1936 the great London Surreal exhibition, and the 1938 show, showed refinement and taste and the return to the art object as aesthetic vehicle, but collage of found objects and images had become very much part of the sculptor's vocabulary. The films and performances became more restrained, working well in the avant-garde art context. Shock was more subtle, though the greatest radical shift in imagination was made by Marcel Duchamp-Villon who organized the first 'installation' at the 1938 'International Exhibition of Surrealism' in Paris. He hung the ceiling of the main room with 1,200 coalsacks filled with paper, a gramophone played Nazi marches, there was an ornamental pool, the smell of roasting coffee beans was sent wafting around the air, and the glowing brazier provided the only light, the electric torches provided to view the actual works by having been stolen at the Opening. - At other exhibitions Duchamp designed a maze of string, and another time a shower of indoor rain falling onto artificial grass and a billiard table.



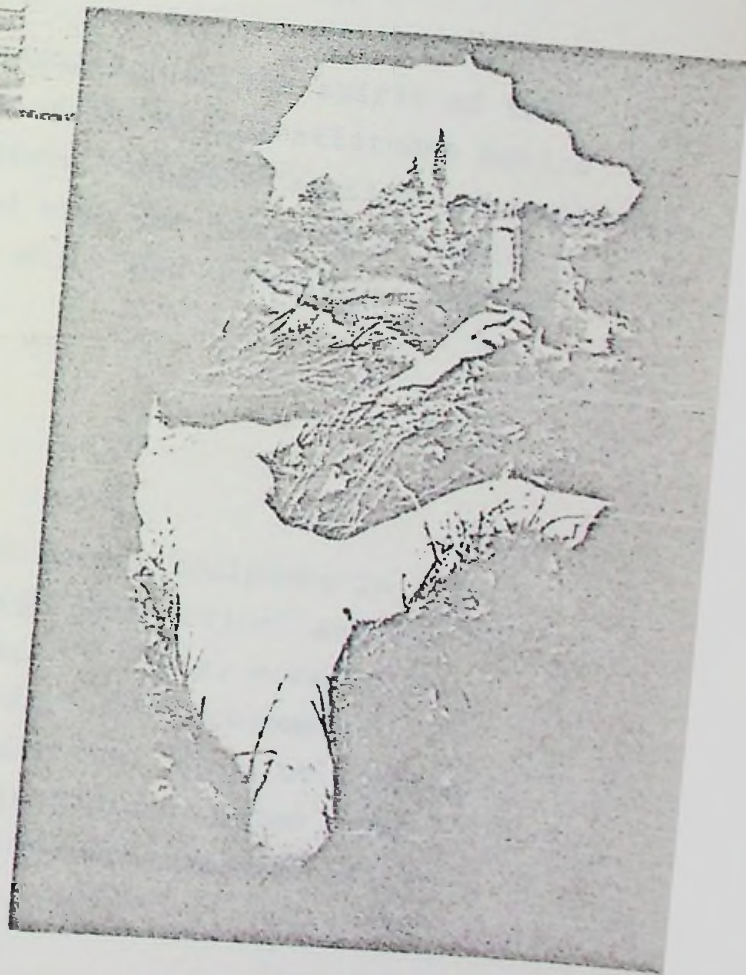
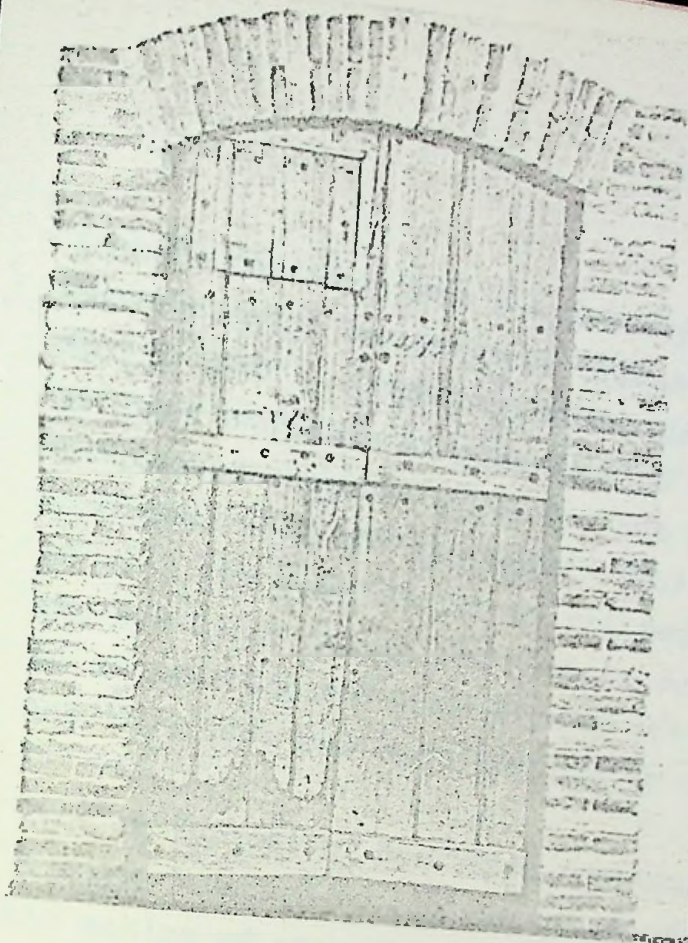
37. DUCHAMP - Companion piece to the Large Glass
GREEN BOX - exact facsimiles of 93 documents -
results of his thoughts as he developed the work

MARCEL DUCHAMP

The influence of Marcel Duchamp is all-pervasive - and he has been blamed for many things, ill-studied and interpreted - yet from his first Cubist paintings, especially the NUDE DESCENDING A STAIRCASE, his philosophy developed his art far more on the lines of the Futurist concerns - with movement, with time, with the context of the art object, with multiple sensation. He painted the definitive version of his NUDE in January 1912 - the first Futurist exhibition took place in Paris in the next month. In 1913 this painting was sent to the Armory Show in New York, which show revealed Brancusi's heads of Miss Pogany also to America. In the previous May, he painted LE ROI ET LA REINE ENTOURES DE NUS VITES, painted after many studies and drawings. During the summer of 1912, which he passed in Munich, Duchamp reached the end of his pictorial period with tow mysterious paintings LE PASSAGE DE LA VIERGE A LA MAIREE and MARIEE. He obtained a librarian's post, and from 1914, while working on his 'Large Glass' - LA MARIEE MIS A NUS PAR SES CELIBATAIRES MEME - he began a series of ready-mades, manufactured objects of colour prints for which he was content to provide a title and sign them. Picabia joined him in New York in 1915 and the Dada network was firmly established. After that time he lived mainly in New York. Andre Breton hailed him as "the great mesmeriser of modern art" - and much of his philosophical speculation has centered around the origins of the Tarot, Zen, alchemistic delvings and the cabbala. An enormous area of study, of writing and some art has developed around the work and pronouncements of this amazing man. He profoundly changed the direction of post-Second World War art - while the New York market carried on with the great canvases of ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM, David Smith, and all the great metal sculptors continued to make larger and larger masses, the ideas behind his work filtered quietly through to art in unexpected ways.

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39. DUCHAMP - THE DOOR from Etant Donnes
 La chute d'eau le gaz d'eclairage
 Philadelphia Museum of Art 1946-66
 A View Through the Door

I quote one line from a typically Duchampian address to 'The Convention of the American Federation of Arts - Huston - Texas, April, 1957'. The address was in fact concerned with the artists awareness or otherwise of himself at work DURING the process of creating the art - but he expressed very particularly his coern with the spectator - who receives the work - 'All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the outside world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications, and thus adds his contributions to the creative act".

This is typical of Duchamp's continuation of the spirit of the attacks launched by the Futurists on the mental attitudes behind the making of art - American, Western European painting and sculpture were at this time wholly concerned with the Romantic struggle of the artist to create his art - which was then placed before the public - or not.

THE SCULPTURE MAINSTREAM

The innovations in the mainstream of modern sculpture in the Twenties and Thirties came mainly from Abstraction, and the use of different materials. Brancusi in Paris, working in wood, working with shape, wrestling with the problems of support and display, finally broke into real space as opposed to Sculpture space, with his Tirgu Jiu Endless Column, the Table, the war memorial. The sculpture was now made of various different, but equal parts.

Gaudi, Gonzales, Picasso, David Smith, each took the material iron, and wrestled, melted and welded new structures.

Moore's monolithic bronzes, stones, Hepworth's organic forms, all stayed within the sculptural definition except for increasing the amount of organic abstraction, and for breaking through the solid.

At this point in time, on the eve of the Second World War, sculpture and the context of art had in fact been redefined. First by the statements of Futurists, painting by the Cubists and Malevich, the context of the artist's role by the Russians. Conceptual Art was given birth to by Lissitsky while the essence of sculpture had been taken apart by Tatlin, by Rodchenko.

Yet, as I have just enumerated the mainstream of 'modern' and indeed 'avant-garde' sculpture - still would be best described by the qualities listed here in the left-hand column.

Static	Dynamic
Solid	Transparent
Permanent	Ephemeral
Figurative	Abstract or else itself about itself
Material subdued	Materials of all kinds or about materials
'Sculptural presence'	non-dominating
Volume in the round	occupying space or containing space or defining space
Singular	made from another thing altogether to symbolise or signify in an unexpected place made of several parts

The next stage, helped by the Nazi nightmare in Europe, was for a new generation to pick up these possibilities.

TO AMERICA

I must now move to America - to Black Mountain College. The American art colleges had many of them absorbed refugees from Nazi Germany - the Basic Course had been adapted by a number of Old Bauhaus Students and Teachers - at the New Bauhaus, architecture predominated. Joseph Albers and his wife Annie had, however, been teaching at the 'eccentric' Black Mountain College. The idea of integrating subject matter taught here in order to develop individuals capable of choosing, thinking for themselves, was new to education at College level at this time. The inner struggle was the worthwhile one, 'not the struggle against one's fellows, but against one's own ignorance and clumsiness'. (John Andrew Rice - Founding Member)

Albers was a superb teacher, although he spoke no English. His wife often foresook her weaving classes to interpret. He learned English only painfully, yet his influence on American Art has been enormous. "Albers felt "that you can build the general character through art - you can incite interest in science, in knowledge of any kind....any exploring and discipline and so on, can all be developed within art". (Duberman: Black Mountain College). Among those who studied under him, Robert Rauschenberg overcame the enormous discipline which was Albers overriding trait - almost Prussian in comparison with the American idea of the artistic way of life. He taught the Bauhaus Basic Course, but he taught it fiercely and well. First he gave his students direct contact with material, forbidding the use of tools other than the hand, the fingers. "in the outside world"he would explain,"paper is generally folded and used as a flat sheet. In that process, one side of the paper often loses its expressiveness. The edge is hardly ever used". So, instead of pasting, Albers encouraged his students to put paper together "by buttoning, sewing, riveting, taping, and pinning it"; in other words we fasten it in a multitude of ways. We will test the possibilities of its tension and compression resistant strength". And the paper was never destroyed or supplanted.

Finally, Alber's courses were themselves never narrowly technical; they involved principles and procedures applicable to a wide variety of activities - the need to be aware of everyday objects and their individual properties; the essence of primary experience, of direct feeling and seeing, of problem-solving out of one's own experience; the importance of economy, leanness and discipline, the realization that form has meaning. What Albers embodied above all was a search "to make some kind of order out of things" - a search many took to be emblematic of the college as a whole. He left the college in 1948, the college which flexed and grew and changed throughout its history, outgrew him.

Most of the experimentation done in theatre in the Pre war Black Mountain College was by Alexander (Xanti) Schawinsky who had been at the Bauhaus. He taught drawing and 'Stage Studies' there from 1936-1938 before moving on to the New Bauhaus in Chicago. I quote from Duberman's BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE (Secker + Warburg, London) "Earthy, exuberantly undisciplined, Schawinsky was viewed as something of a wild man at Black Mountain, and by the time he decided to leave, in 1938, the Board had already unofficially agreed that he was not to be invited to stay. But though Schawinsky antagonised some he gave the college two of its most memorable evenings".

"The first was based on work he had done ten years earlier at the Bauhaus, where he had tried to translate into theatrical terms the Constructivists concern with dissolving narrative logic, and with using pantomime, movement, colour, sound and light to reinforce and to replace language". His first full evening, the "Spectodrama" (1927/37) is best described in his own words: Spectodrama is an educational method aiming at the interchange between the Arts and Sciences and using the theatre as a laboratory and place of action and experimentation. The working group is composed of representatives of all disciplines.. tackling prevailing concepts and phenomena from different viewpoints, and creating stage representations expressing them. Spectodrama focusses on the visual - on symphonic inter-action

and effect; colour and form, motion and light, sound and music; illustration and improvisation" in search of a new alphabet that might provide a more complex means of expression and communication".

Schawinsky's second evening "Danse Macabre" (1938) was as ambitious a 'total theatre' production in the round, including an original score composed by John Evarts and played by the Black Mountain College Orchestra, under Allan Sly; and with the participation of the audience (wearing identical masks and cloaks and forming the outside circles of the spectacle) - in other words, a mixed media celebration which predated by almost 15 years the famed 1952 performance of Cage, Rauschenberg, Olson and Cunningham. (The which is usually credited with being the first such event in the United States).

JOHN CAGE

A musician, composer, who had studied with Schönberg, was invited to teach composition at Black Mountain College in 1952. At the same time Stefan Wolpe was teaching there - he had been a friend of Kurt Schwitters in the early Dada days. Rauschenberg was studying there - painting - Franz Kline, David Tutor, the pianist, Olson the poet, Merce Cunningham, the dancer. A ceramics workshop took place, with three of the world's greatest potters - Shoji Hamada, Dr. Soetsu Yanagi, father of the Japanese crafts revival, and Bernard Leach. Cage, who had studied Zen philosophy with Daisetz Suzuki, and who had studied Marcel Duchamp's work and writings, had been introduced to the I-Ching by his master. "The I-Ching gives us the possibility of flexibility instead of inflexibility. We must stop resisting change. At least that is my experience. I need only listen to the sounds around me. They change all the time".

Cage composes for the sake of people rather than for the sake of music. "The reason I am less and less interested in music is not only that I find environmental sounds and noises more useful aesthetically than the sound produced by the world's musical cultures, but that, when you get right down to it, a composer is simply someone who tells other people what to do. I find this an unattractive way of getting things done. I'd like our activities to be more social and anarchically so." (Statement in Stedelijk museum bulletin 6/7/8 1978)

This statement was true in 1952 - when he and David Tudor together decided to construct an event - giving each participant the freedom to make a whole event, but with the simultaneity and interpenetration producing entirely chance effects, different for each onlooker, depending on his/her own life's experience and associations. The onlookers were seated on inward-facing blocks of seats, intersected by diagonal pathways, and each report of the event is different. Basically Cage read from the Huang Po Doctrine of Universal Mind, Merce danced, Rauschenberg's white paintings hung from the ceiling, with projected images and shadows, Charles Olson read poems from a ladder or rostrum -.

A note from Francine Du Plessix's diary after a conversation with Cage at this time:

"In Zen Buddhism, nothing is either good or bad. Or ugly or beautiful. The actions of man in nature are an undifferentiated and unhierarchical complex of events, which hold equal indifference to the ultimate factor of oneness. No value judgements are possible because nothing is better than anything else. Art should not be different than life but an act within life. Like all of life, with its accidents and chances and variety and disorder and only momentary beauties. Only different from life in this sense: that in life appreciation is passive, like listening to a sound complex of bird, waterfall and engine, whereas in art it must be a voluntary act on the

part of the creator and of the listener".

FLUXUS

From these events come the evergrowing stream of Happenings, Performances, Events - and the more recent individual Performance and Body Arts. I will just outline some of the work of the Fluxus Group which proved the early stimulus for these in the Sixties and Seventies.

George Brecht: Talking to Robin Page in Domus 522, May 1973, article by Art and Artists - October 1972.

"People think it was a movement - it wasn't."

"I say let it go. After all, FLUXUS is a Latin word Maciunas dug up. I never studied Latin. If it hadn't been for Maciunas nobody might ever have called it anything. We would all have gone our own ways, like the man crossing the street with his umbrella, and a woman walking a dog in another direction. We would have gone our own way and done our own thing; the only reference-point for any of this bunch of people who liked each other's work, and each other, more or less, was Maciunas".

"Fluxus developed from a state of mind into a state of mind - through many musical events, art events, postal events, Fluxus objects - video works - its character reflects, reflected the individual character of any one person who chose to involve his work with that of others - always seeking new frontiers of awareness of time, of situation - Fluxus act (s) (ed) as a counter environment to much of the avant-garde. For a strategy, Fluxus has been to the other art situations as a daily newspaper to the glossy magazines. The publication of the latter is an EVENT at FIXED INTERVALS, the ritual nature of which demands an appropriate make-up- four color-cover, "Important" articles, and an approach which does away with details and

bothers only with 'what matters'. The Fluxus shows are art events connected with the everydayness of daily reality. And like articles in a newspaper, the works of Fluxus artists don't have to be connected by any close common denominator other than the medium by which they are linked, which in the case in point is Maciunas himself" Daniela Palazzoli, Domus 522.

Participants in Fluxus at various times, from the start in 1958 to the death of Maciunas in 1978, have been numerous - each totallu individual, the spirit of Fluxus - "PURGE the world of bourgeois sickness, 'intellectual' professional and commercialized culture, PURGE the world of dead art imitation, artificial art, abstract art, illusionist art, mathematical art". (George Maciunas in the first FLUXUS manifesto).

Eric Anderson, Aylo, Joseph Beuys, George Brecht, Phil Corner, Robert Filliou, Henry Flynt, Ken Friedman, Bici Hendricks, Dick Higgins, Hi Red Center, Joe Jones, Per Kirkeby, Milan Knizak, Alison Knowles, Addi Koepcke, Takehisa Kosugi, Yoko Ono, George Maciunas, Nam June Paik, Benjamin Patterson, Tomas Schmit, La Monte Young, Mieko Shiomi, Daniel Spoerri, Ben Vautier, Wolf Vostell, Bob Watts, Emmet Williams.

The Something Else Press until it closed in 1974, was probably the most interesting publishing venture in the history of art, for the range and creativity of its list.

The spirit of Fluxus lives - though the form has been taken over by the establishment avant-garde galleries to be found in every city in the West. The spirit of Fluxus insisted that everyday reality is far more interesting and important than conscious art - thus professional artists should finally be purged from the world.

I quote from the translator's note in AN ANECDOTED TOPOGRAPHY OF CHANCE by DANIEL SPOERRI.

"More on the subject of museums: ALLAN KAPROW wrote in his introduction to 'DANIEL SPOERRI'S Room No.631 at the Chelsea Hotel' an exhibition sponsored by the Green gallery in New

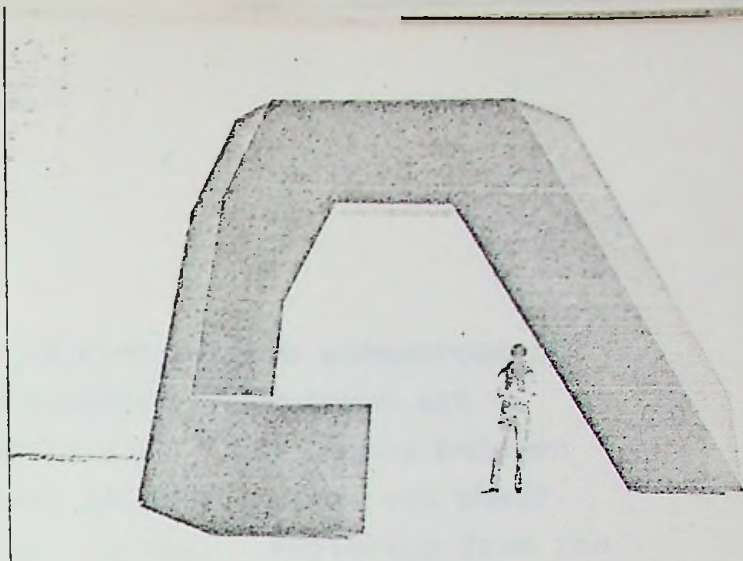
York in March 1965:

"...artists have paid only partial attention to how deeply their works reflect and utilize the environment in which they were created. They speak about the light at the seashore appearing in their colours; the profound effect upon their dreams of the filth and reek of urine-soaked studio-loft buildings, the pounding of the subway under their feet....Yet when their works are shown in the neo-classical gallery-box, it is supposed that these qualities of the environment are brought out A FORTIORI and that the gallery will have no other effect than to focus upon the essentials of the work.

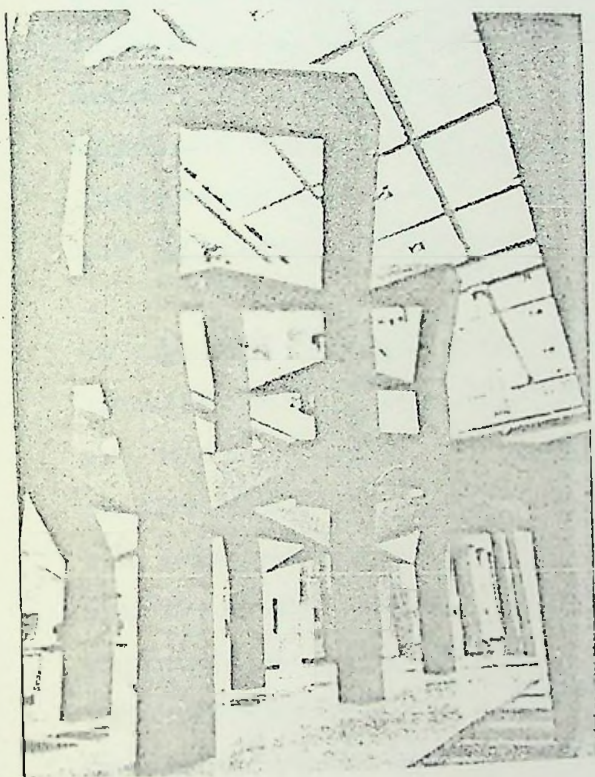
This is patently absurd, utter blindness. Today nine out of ten artists' work is absolutely dessicated by the powerful purity of the gallery and museum atmosphere. Everything whispers 'sh, sh, don't touch'. If art was once thought to be made from life in order to leave life, now the great bulk of modern creativity is deliberately mixed with life in order to affirm it.

Spoerri's philosophical works were made in a hotel room, where he slept, made love, cooked marvellous meals, and defecated. His constructions crowded the space, mingling with the bed, the clothes, the odour of lasagne. One must pick one's way through this intriguing mess. Where does the work of art end, and life begin? Look into peep holes, turn a mirror and see the reflected curtain, lift the test tube phallus of a flowered hermaphrodite, contemplate an embalmed meal once eaten, the shoes of lovers facing one another. Here there is no hallucination, only wholeness.

I suggested that SPOERRI invite the public to see his room, as it is being lived in, not as a memento or shrine. It was in line with his own intentions. I was convinced that this would would never appear as meaningfully again. By agreeing, he has contributed to the eventual death of the art gallery and museums. This death will take time, but meanwhile, the world has become endlessly available". (2/19/65)



43. TONY SMITH Work from Sculpture Garden
Museum of Modern Art New York



TONY SMITH - SMOKE 1967

42. 24ft x 34ft x 48ft Plywood mock-up to be made in steel
Fischbach Gallery, New York.

44. HANS ANDERSEN memorial

Central Park, New York



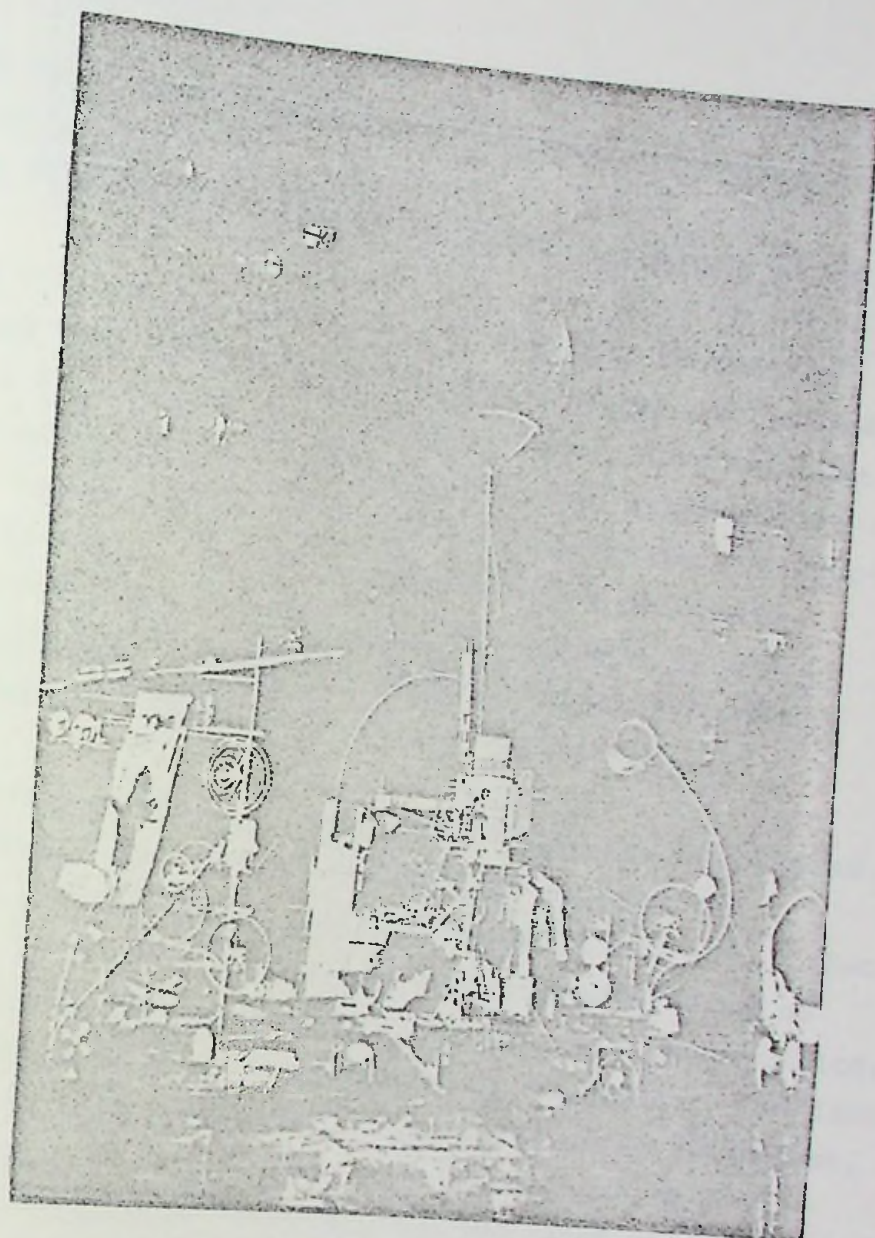
THE SIXTIES IN AMERICA

The vast outpouring of work in the Sixties, the mainstream of Abstract Expressionism and 'Constructivism' rendered art ever more alien from the new generation. The choice between the formalism system, the New York Gallery system, and what? The young artists started to make new art. Following from the freedom of Happenings, the rise of Rock music - the Beatles and Stones released a vast pent-up energy which led to the great revolution of thinking in the West. Static sculptors like George Rickey started to make kinetic art - which soon became an acceptable art form - the experiments in electronics, flashing lights, and tinkling electronics - were never anti-establishment. The Pop Art soft sculpture of Oldenbourg was similarly acceptable - and digested into the market.

But the new art was continuing - Beuys working away in Germany - artists were out in the deserts and mountainsides, making art which couldn't be wrapped up and delivered - couldn't hang on the wall. The preoccupation with the event, the participation, the new focus on what the spectator received from the work, how he could participate in it, refined from the simplicity of Happenings, the mob high. Allan Kaprow, in his 1968 retrospective survey, ASSEMBLAGE AND ENVIRONMENTS, put the concerns of the artist very clearly.

For the sculptor - who still believed in the potential of the static object he proposed 'further enlargement of art's subject matter' Materials are the subject matter. They refer directly to our lives. CONFRONT "what is and what is not fit for art' ideas. "Such highmindedness is not at all different from the 17th Century belief in the greater 'noble' themes over 'genre' paintings.

But as "the art critic Lawrence Alloway has observed, our 'throwaway' culture has permeated deeply into the very method and substance of contemporary creative art." (Quoted by Kaprow in Assemblage and Environments)



41. TINGUELY HOMMAGE A NEW YORK

1960 Museum of Modern Art, New York

WORKS OF SHORT DURATION

The other major question raised by Kaprow - or rather made plain by him:-

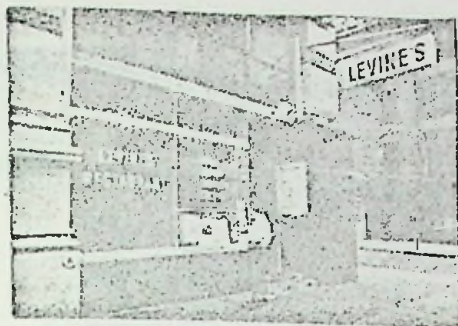
"PHYSICAL FRAGILITY, LASTING SHORT TIME: DESTROYED AFTER SHORT TIME"

"Actually the whole question of the enduring versus the passing has been coming up since Impressionism challenged the West's deep belief in the stable, clear and permanent. These qualities were thought to be the high achievements of a striving, rational mind which has overcome brute and chaotic forces of nature. But while Impressionist paintings certainly conveyed philosophically the concept of the fleeting and the changing as a supreme value, the actual painting could be expected to last indefinitely...."

"These choices (the use of debris etc) must not be ignored, for they reveal what in our surroundings changes the imagination as well as what is most human in our art. But beyond this is the larger issue of reality understood as CONSTANT METAMORPHOSES. This viewpoint, this metaphysics, is more fundamental than our 'throwaway' culture. The latter is the topical vehicle for the former, and while important, should become something else in time. The conception of a non-fixed, organic universe, however, has pervaded our thinking for a longer historical space".

A piece of work which perfectly expressed one part of this philosophy, the change and destruction, and which continues to be part of his work, was JEAN TINGUELY'S HOMAGE TO NEW YORK - made in 1960, a huge construction, eccentrically fabricated as his wont, involving weather balloons, smoke-bombs, and pianos, as well as tons of more conventional machinery, the piece slowly pulled itself apart in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in front of an amazed crowd.

Gustav Metzger's demonstration of acid nylon technique in 1960 was not quite the same, for he himself carried out the destruction.



46. Les LEVINE - LEVINE'S RESTAURANT 1969



45. Les LEVINE - DISPOSABLES 1966

SPECIFIC WORKS - LATE SIXTIES - EARLY 1970's

In 1965 Carl Andre made a terse statement, as is his wont:
The course of development
Sculpture as form
Sculpture as structure
Sculpture as place.

In 1966 David Bourdon commented on his piece "The Razed Sites of Carl Andre" "When an artist sees sculpture as place, there is no room for actual sculptures to accumulate. Andre's works come into existence only when necessary. When not on exhibition, the pieces are dismantled..".

1967 FLUIDS A HAPPENING BY ALLAN KAPROW
During three days, about twenty rectangular enclosures of ice blocks (measuring about 30 feet long, 10 wide and 8 high) are built throughout the city. Their walls are unbroken. They are left to melt.

Originally designed for the involvement of many people in the making, the pieces melted, yet the idea of the functionless, entranceless, blocks, melting soundlessly, works perfectly.

In 1968 Carl Andre made an outdoor piece JOINT 183 units of uncovered, common, baled hay, 14" X 18" X 36" each. "As far as I know, this was the first time artists were asked to build a show around whatever situation they found operating at a preordained location and time, with the additional handicap of a nearly non-existent budget". (Chuck Ginnever, organizer)



47 Robert MORRIS - UNTITLED 1968
thread, mirrors, asphalt, lead, aluminium, felt, copper,
steel Leo Castelli Gallery



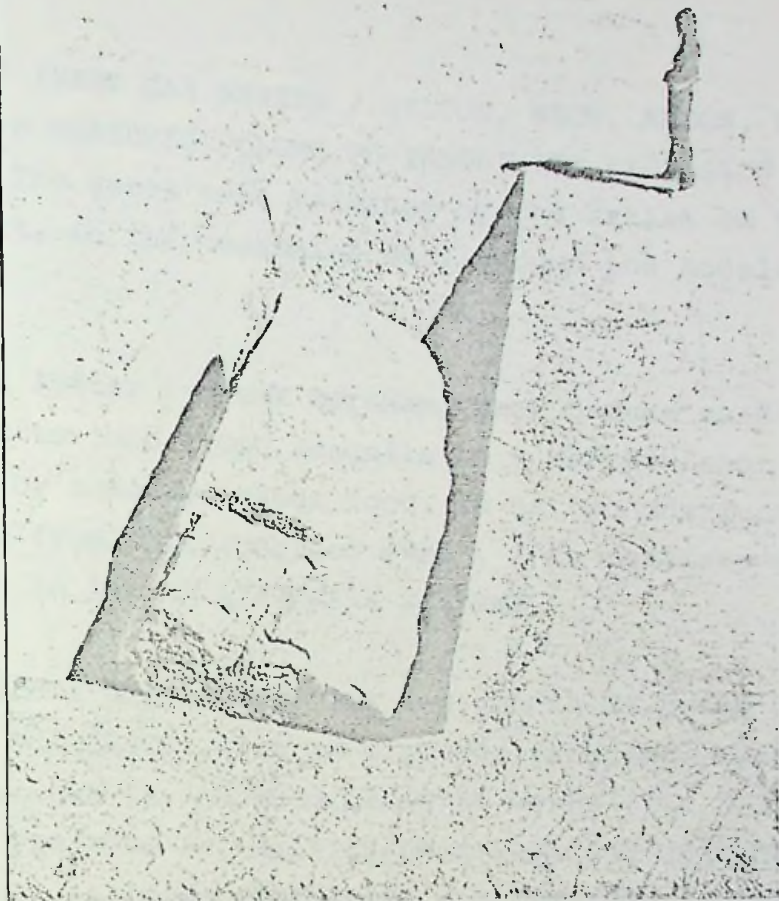
48. Hans HAACKE - RANDOM AIRBORNE SYSTEMS 1968

49. Hans HAACKE - CHICKEN HATCHING APRIL 1969

PETER HUTCHINSON PARICUTIN VOLCANO JANUARY 1970.
Account of making his bread and mold coloured piece in the
volcano's crater.

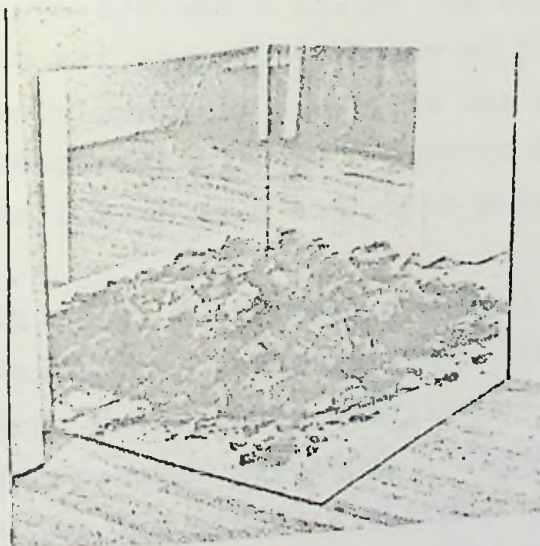
"My project was to lay the bread, wet it once, and let the steam and heat of the rocks and sun do the rest. I expected the mold to grow in large quantities and, I hoped, in patches large enough to show in the photographs I would make. I would cover the bread with plastic in the interim, which would condense the water on its surface and make a super-saturated environment in which mold likes to grow. This in effect, would make a greenhouse environment in surroundings which hitherto had been practically sterile, and certainly unable to support molds or even lichens... It is not extraordinary to grow mold on bread. I was not doing so in any scientific sense. I was attempting several other things - to juxtapose a microorganism against a macrocosmic landscape, yet in such amount that the results would be plainly visible through colour changes. I also choose an environment that, although having the necessary elements for growth, needed a subtle alteration on utilization to make growth possible. Volcanic ground is in a sense new material, sterilized and reorganized then thrown out from the deeper crust of the earth. It is similar to the earliest earth landscapes and related to the early geological periods such as the Precambrian when molds and algae played the dominant role on dry land that today belongs to the higher mammals and insects. Today, when volcanoes appear from the sea, they are first colonized by bacteria, molds and algae. The conditions of early history are continually duplicated".

From SIX YEARS THE DEMATERIALIZATION OF THE ART OBJECT
LUCY LIPPARD STUDIO VISTA 1973.



52. Michael HEIZER DISPLACED-REPLACED MASS

51. Robert SMITHSON - SANDSTONE WITH MIRROR 1969
(36"X36") John Weber Gallery New York



53. Lawrence WEINER A NATURAL WATER COURSE DIVERTED REDUCED
OR DISPLACED as executed in INUVIK, North West Territory
September 1969.

ROBERT BARRY / INERT GAS SERIES / HELIUM, NEON, ARGON, KRYPTON, XENON / FROM A MEASURED VOLUME TO INDEFINITE EXPANSION / APRIL 1969 The gases were released by the artist on the beach, in the desert, in the mountains etc. around Los Angeles.

In 1960, in a letter to Jack Burnham, Hans Haacke said: "I would like to lure 1,000 seagulls to a certain spot (in the air) by some delicious food, so as to construct an air sculpture from this combined mass". He realized this piece in 1968 in RANDOM AIRBORNE SYSTEMS.

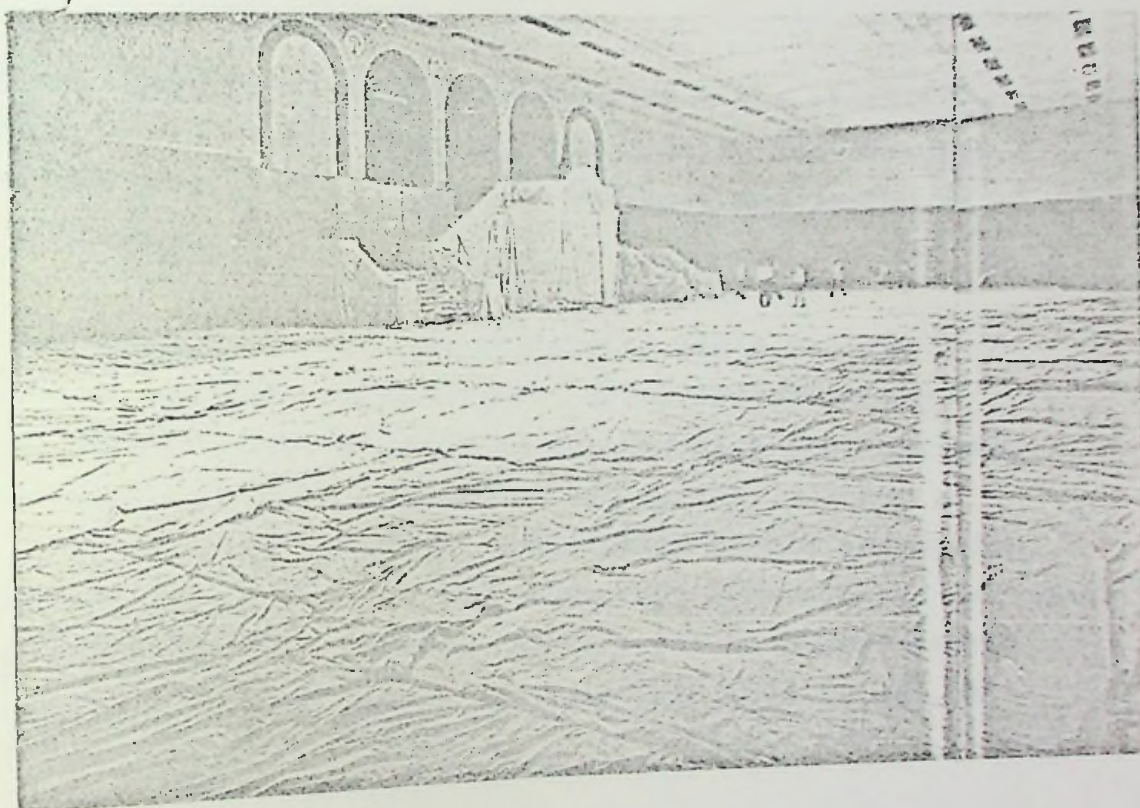
In 1967 he made a piece involving the growth of grass (GRASS CUBE) and in ICE-STICK, with an electric freezing element forming ice around it, he progressed to works like SPRAY OF ITHACA FALLS FREEZING AND MELTING ON A ROPE and CHICKENS HATCHING (1969) and MOSS TRANSPLANT : MAINTAINED IN ARTIFICIAL CLIMATE (Saint Paul, France, 1970).

Jack Burnham wrote in his essay REAL TIME SYSTEMS published in his GREAT WESTERN SALT WORKS in 1973 how he discerned in Haacke the desire to make more and more complex systems, and comment upon systems - Haacke was to become a considered writer-contributor to art theory, yet many of his pieces of short duration were very poetic - his piece for the 1966 Scheveningen art festival consisted of a 150' plastic hose tightly inflated with helium, flying high over beach and sea.

In 1969, Lucy Lippard made a trip to Canada with Lawrence Weiner, to Ian Baxter and Elaine, of the N.E. Thing Co. Here Weiner made examples of his ongoing work 'A natural Watercourse diverted, reduced and displaced' in this case a tiny stone dam across a stream. Sometimes this 'piece' consists of the mark made by a stick in the dust starting and finishing in a runnel mark beside a stream - the gesture suffices. The Baxters work away - Lippard contrasts their attitudes with Weiner's;



50. Jan DIBBETS TV AS A FIREPLACE 1969



54. CHRISTO - WRAPPED FLOOR 1970



56. Douglas HUEBLER - One photo from DURATION PIECE NO. 5
New York April, 1969.

The work of Weiner points to one direction which the earliest expressions of this simplest, short-span work, went - to Conceptual Art, where the idea became the whole of the work, the more dematerialized the vehicle, the better, and of course, Conceptual art then passed rapidly from being a proposal for a piece to being a study of language, the Art Language Group for example, the semiotics, the study of signs, symbols, e.g. Victor Burgin.

The other direction continued to flourish - the short-term art work, the gesture, which was ecologically non-damaging. Baxter had been a zoology major at college, and worked as a nature illustrator.

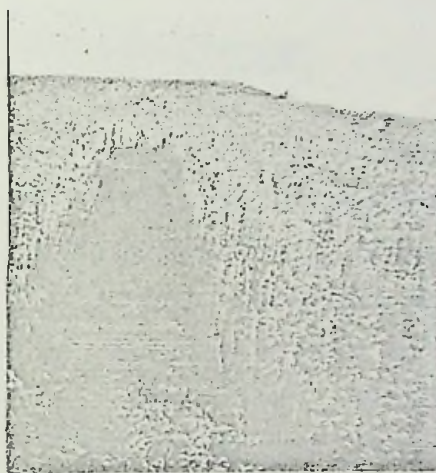
"Yet their heads are entirely different, Ian's rapidly alighted on one idea after another, often contradictory, usually well-McLuhanized and with far-reaching implications; Larry's working slowly, with total seriousness, within a clear, self-defined framework, a basically poetic expression, that defines his art. The all-embracing, Dada element in Iaian disturbs him, as does the idea that art can be entertainment, which he finds debasing and ultimately injurious to art as art". LUCY LIPPARD : CHANGING

Some pieces by the N.E. Thing Co:

Walking Piece, Iain and Elaine circled Inuvik wearing a pedometer and step counting device - some $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles, 10,314 steps. Exchange of water between two rivers - the McKenzie and the Seymour, subtracting from the first to add to the second. Sprayed an East-West Line parallel to the latitudes in the tundra.



55. Richard SERRA - CASTING 1969 (Lead)



57. OPPENHEIM - SURFACE INDENTATION 1968
50 ft long Hamburg, ~~Germany~~ PENNSYLVANIA



58. OPPENHEIM - BRANDED MOUNTAIN 1969
San Pablo, California 30 ft across

RICHARD LONG bridged the information gap between these two attitudes - his earliest works in the landscape were done about 1968 - gradually he started to present maps of his walks - with tasteful landscape photographs of, say, three moments in a four-day walk. He excluded all ideas of physical labour involved, and when he started to make installations in galleries, imitating the work he had made in the landscape, became a reliable establishment artist. Hamish Fulton makes photographs which are far more personal, better as photographs, and does not interfere with the landscape, of course, he does not claim to make sculpture.

DENNIS OPPENHEIM - TEMPORARY GESTURE

DENNIS OPENHEIM is the artist I chose to examine in more detail because his work has consistently refused to interfere drastically with the landscape, rather to inflict marks on his own body, if needs be - a stage of man's ego which corresponds more closely to the pioneer state than that of Robert Smithson, and his wife, Nancy Holt. Their works subscribe to the outdoor monument value - very fine and wonderful, long-lasting by intent, so they do not fall into the area of redefined sculpture I have been writing about.

Dennis Oppenheim was born in 1938 in Mason City, Washington State (West Coast, U.S.A.) and studied at the California College of Arts and Crafts. In 1967 he covered a New York City asphalt Parking lot in salt. In Oakland California, he cut a wedge into the sloping hillside. In 1968 he scattered V-shaped wooden blocks in an avalanche that rolled down a Long Island Expressway escarpment. In New Haven he executed a piece called 'Concentric Rings' (I have been unable to find out more about this piece) and he made some fine pieces, cuts in the ice, including TIME LINE - 3 miles long U.S.A./Canadian boundary along the frozen St John River near Fort Kent, Maine.

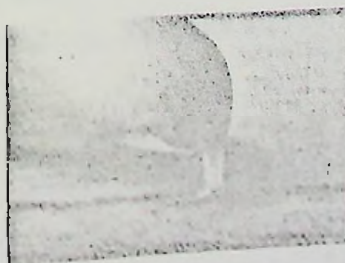
"Throughout 1969, I had the sense of trying to get further away from any traditional usage of material. I felt a great incongruity between my position and almost everything that was



59. Dennis OPPENHEIM - SEPTEMBER WHEAT PROJECT
Finsterwald, Holland April 1969



60. OPPENHEIM - WEIGHT DISPLACEMENT May 1969
Total 600 lb gypsum 400 lb., 200 lb concrete block removed
Galerie Yvon Lambert Paris



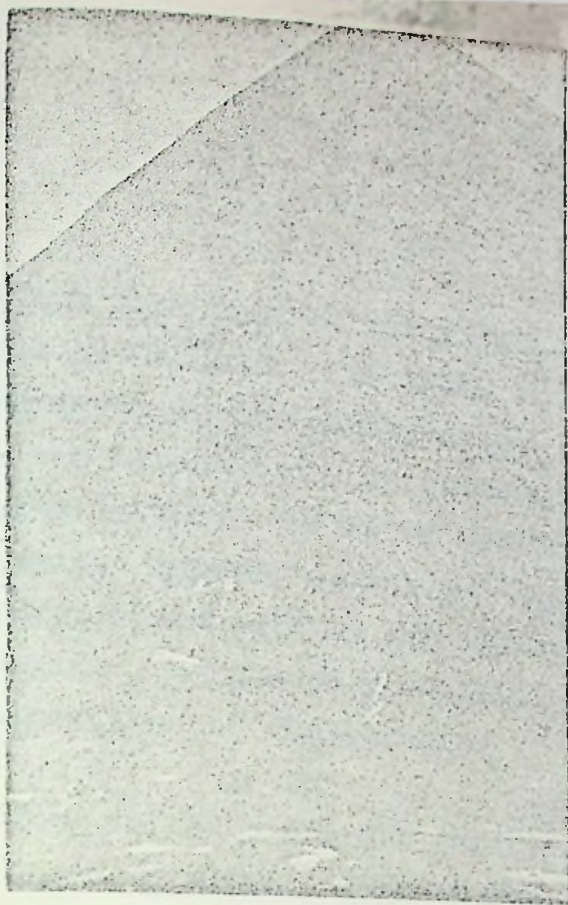
61. OPPENHEIM - MATERIAL INTERCHANGE FOR JOE STRANARD

a product of the art system. I think this was also sensed by a lot of artists involved in this radical break, in terms of how their work related to what was developing contemporaneously". "The aims of the earth-oriented work were far more ambitious on most levels than the process-oriented work (Hesse, Huebler, Morris, Serra, etc. B.K.) which reeked of associations with a past aesthetic which we understood only too well".

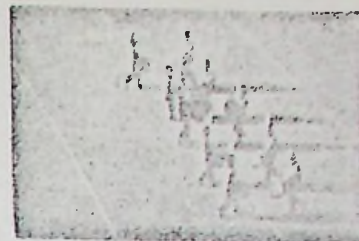
1969 was an extremely important year for Oppenheim - and was the year in which his catalytic influence really started to work.

In March-April, he had a page in the page-project book in OP LOSSE SCHROEVEN SITUATIES EN CRYPTOSTRUCTUREN (SQUARE PEGS IN ROUND HOLES) at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. The influence of this show, and of WHEN ATTITUDES BECOME FORM (Kunsthalle, Bern March-April 1969 - after at the ICA London in August September) was widespread. "This summer I will work within the mid-Western United States, using the wheat production and processing industry as a framework. Each stage of this media gridwork will be inspected and rearranged in accordance with a strict aesthetic masterplan. Last July, I directed the linear harvest of a 300' X 900' oat field in Hamburg, Pennsylvania. This time, isolated episodes will be directed towards a core network involving every permutation (from planting to distributing the product). The aesthetic effect of the interaction will permeate the range in which it deals - communication outside the system will come in the form of photographic documentation, excursions, and an annual report".

In fact, he made several wheat crop pieces - the photographs contain the aesthetic excitement and imagination which appears in much of his work, which is frequently lacking in that of his followers.



63. OPPENHEIM - BACKTRACK 1969



62. OPPENHEIM - KANSAS GROUND MUTATIONS



65. OPPENHEIM - GROUND MUTATIONS - SHOE-PRINTS New Jersey 1969



64. OPPENHEIM - LAND INCISION (DOCUMENTATION) 1969

In the same year he presented a piece in the ART BY TELEPHONE show in Chicago. He asked that piles of five materials prominent in the construction of the museum be distributed on the museum floor in piles equal to my weight at the time of installation. Piles of progressively heavier materials, insulation, sawdust, gypsum, cement and iron filings. "Each week the museum would call me and adjust the piles according to my weight. My everyday activities were thus controlling the proportions of the material".

In May he had a one-man exhibition at the Yvon Lambert Gallery in Milan. One of the pieces he did there was SOUND ENCLOSED LAND AREA. This consisted of a sound tape of his footsteps while he walked around a selected area of the city for a specific time following a map.

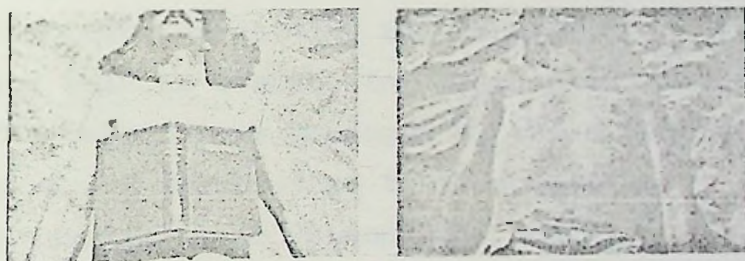
In September 1969, he made a film, BACKTRACK at Jones Beach, New York. He had conceived this film as a conscious focus on the physical act of making: and then he made WRIST, ARM AND ASPHALT.

'Throughout 1968/69, I had the sense of trying to get further away from any traditional usage of material'.

GROUND MUTATIONS using special shoes, with four inch diagonal grooves cut down the soles and heels, Oppenheim walked about New York and New Jersey 'connecting the patterns of thousands of individuals'.



66. OPPENHEIM and FIORE Stills from ARM AND WIRE
1969



67. OPPENHEIM - SECOND DEGREE BURN 1970



68. OPPENHEIM - ASPEN GROUND MUTATIONS 1970

At this time, while coming to grips with the essential characteristics of body and landmass - strength and weakness - he came up against the dilemma of recording, the distancing via the camera of the spectator - film as a passive vehicle worried him:

'For instance, I would consider doing something with my fingers or fingernails, even begin to do it, and then I would have to think about where to put the lights, the camera, all that baggage. Which usually ends up distorting the project so badly you can't recognize it. These are all retrograde factors'.

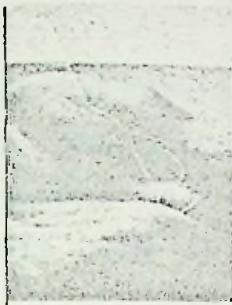
However, he made three more film pieces - ARM AND WIRE, ARM AND ASPHALT and LAND INCISION.

"ARM AND WIRE incorporates a very close shot of my arm rolling across electrical cording, receiving the impression on the skin. Basically I make no distinction between the material and the tool. The impressions produced by the expenditure of downward pressure are returned to their source and registered on the material that expends the energy. It was this economy I found interesting. ARM AND WIRE was an attempt to make WHAT you are making and HOW you are making it one and the same thing. It consolidated output and compressed it into the same act".

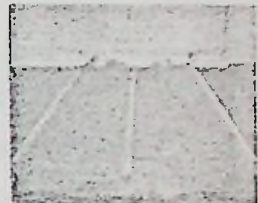
He made ARM AND ASPHALT about land as a parallel surface to skin. He rolled his underarm over sharp bits of asphalt. Intercuts of a landmass related the action back to the original sites of the earth material. In LAND INCISION made with Bob Fiore he wanted to correlate an incision in his wrist and the slow healing process with a cut or large ditch in the terrain.

Coming into 1970, he made WRIST, which involved the slow flexing of his wrist, constantly fading onto land which bore a morphological resemblance of his wrist. In HAIR PIECE Oppenheim exposed part of his scalp to a video camera.

69. OPPENHEIM - WOUND 1970



WOUND - 1970
 A close-up photograph of a wound on a rock face, showing a dark, irregular shape. The surrounding rock is light-colored and textured. The photograph is oriented horizontally.



72. OPPENHEIM - TWO JUMPS FOR DEAD DOG CREEK - IDAHO 1970



73. OPPENHEIM - DEFORMITY - ASPEN SUMMER 1970

74. OPPENHEIM - RESIDUE COLLECTION

He has always been interested in, involved in, sites, maps, charting, sampling - SALIVA SAMPLE TESTS AND IDENTITY TRANSFERS he carried out at Yale in 1969 - work in the landscape of his body at a cellular level.

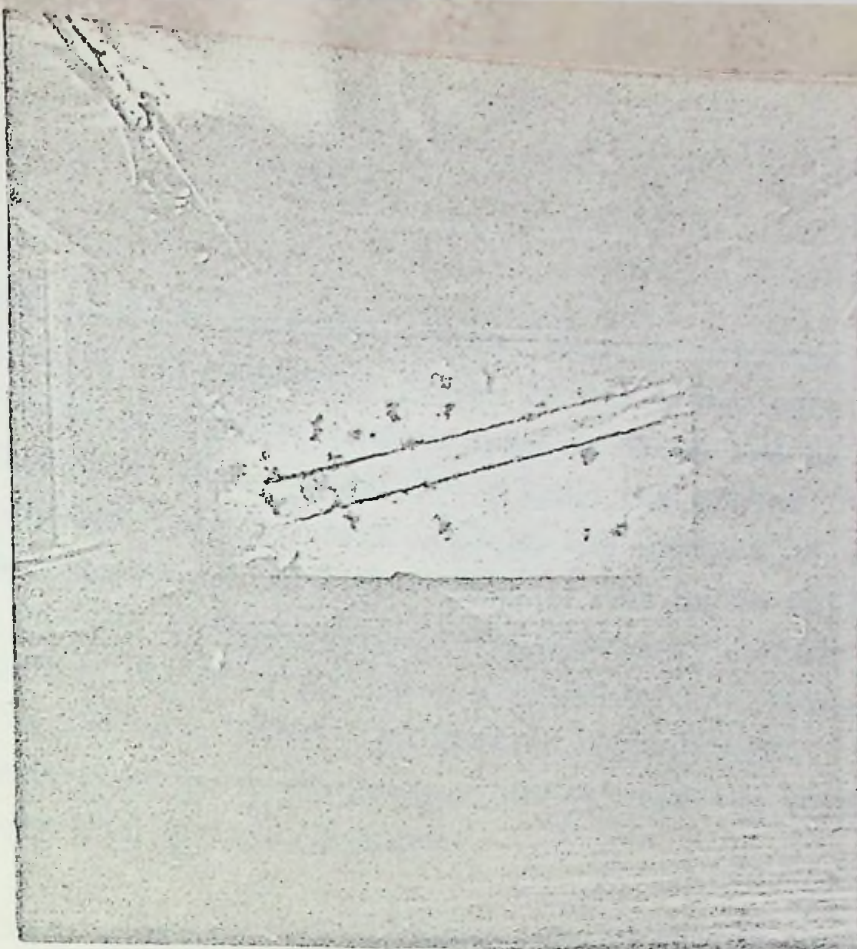
In 1960 a brick had been dropped on his big toe, resulting in permanent deformation - he used the toe nail in DEFORMITY (Aspen, Summer 1970) MATERIAL INTERCHANGE, ASPEN GROUND MUTATIONS become intimate, incredibly quiet, yet violent, transactions between his body, perhaps a fingernail detached, wedged between some gallery floorboards, sound track of nail tapping on boards, in fact while making the soundtrack the finger became host to a splinter from the floor - a MATERIAL INTERCHANGE.

READING POSITION FOR SECOND DEGREE BURN - Oppenheim lay on the beach, covered his chest with a large leather bound book called TACTICS - "I allowed myself to become painted, my skin became pigment. I could relate its intensity through control of the exposure time ...I could feel the act of becoming red. I was tattooed by the sun".

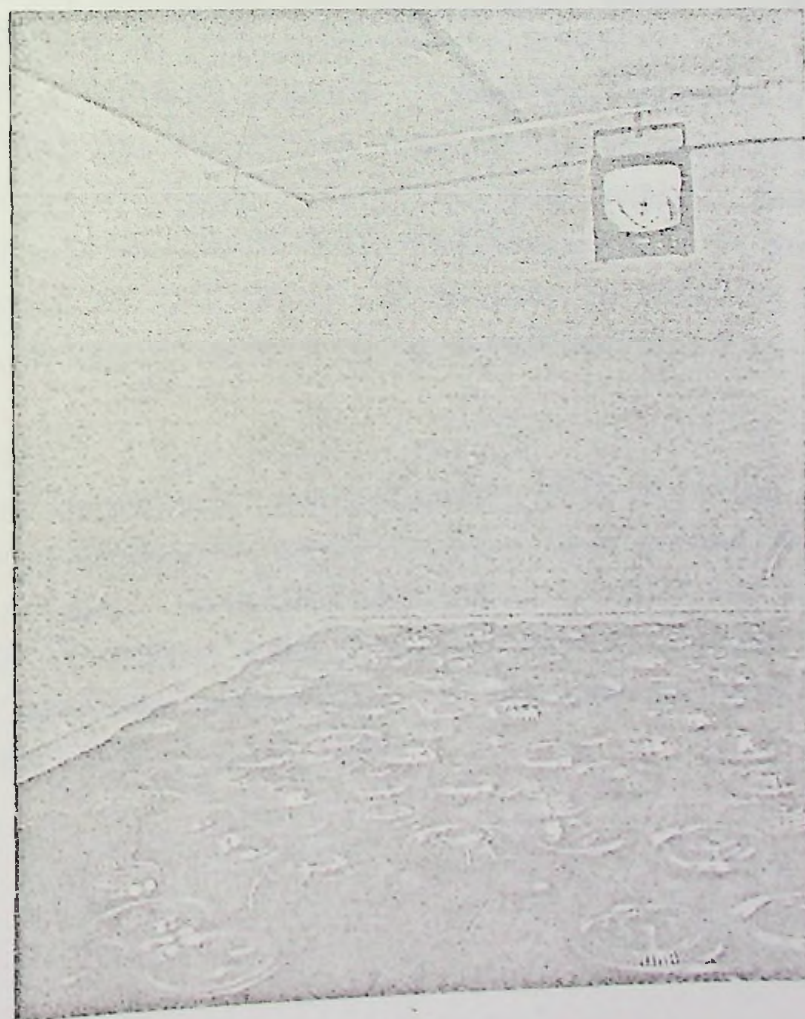
TWO JUMPS FOR DEAD DOG CREEK: he repeated standing jumps until he had created two perfect ones - then went back and repeated them in John Gibson's gallery, on sand - having discussed the year before with Andre & Smithson the business of the sculptor perfecting his skill, his gesture...

'the body falls to the ground, the leg makes contact with sharp rock. The rock is not changed - the external material does not register the transaction. The leg, the tool does. It's like pounding a nail, not to merge into the wood, but to make an impression on the hammer'.

In 1969 he had made a piece about residue collection - he drove a car round Kearny, New Jersey for a full day after sterilizing the surface and then made a microscopic record of the residue collected, ...he leaves this work behind as too broad, too general, too distanced from physical experience of the artist or of the onlooker.



75. Dennis OPPENHEIM - ADRENOCHROME 1970-3
Installation - Sonnabend Gallery, New York

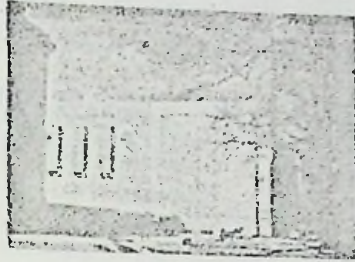


76. Dennis OPPENHEIM - VIOLATIONS December 1971 - 1972

The first of the IDENTITY TRANSFER pieces 'show my daughter Kristin transferring the papillary ridges of her thumb onto my thumb. I then transfer this print onto my thumb and he terminates the process by transferring it onto the ground. It's a linear regression going back through the members of a family until an impasse is reached. Then at the Reese Palley Gallery (1970) I made a glass slide of the papillary ridges of my right thumb print in blood and projected it to a three-foot diameter on the wall using a projection microscope... the piece becomes completely autonomous, using material within the thumb to make its surface visible'.

Besides these very intimate, yet extremely sharp works, he also in 1970 completed a number of larger outdoor projects - which involved rather more people"I did a series of pieces involving groups of people on land called GROUND MUTATIONS, a major one in Kansas, involving the Kansas Drill Team. I gave them a diagram to follow, and asked them to start at opposing sides of a football stadium. They went through a half-hour march that eventually led them to the 50 yard line at which point they broke into a very fast drum roll. When they found they could no longer drum, they stopped. It became a static diagram based on individual exhaustion, in relation to the group, and a method of establishing a configuration at ground level."

A similar piece at Aspen dealt more directly with duration. I dug a one-acre-wedge-shaped trench running from ground level to a depth of six feet. I wanted this to be marched for 24 hours a day, for a week in shifts, with a drummer moving diagonally across the field drumming constantly. I was able to have it done for only a fraction of that time.



70. OPPENHEIM - PROTECTION (Dogs) 1970

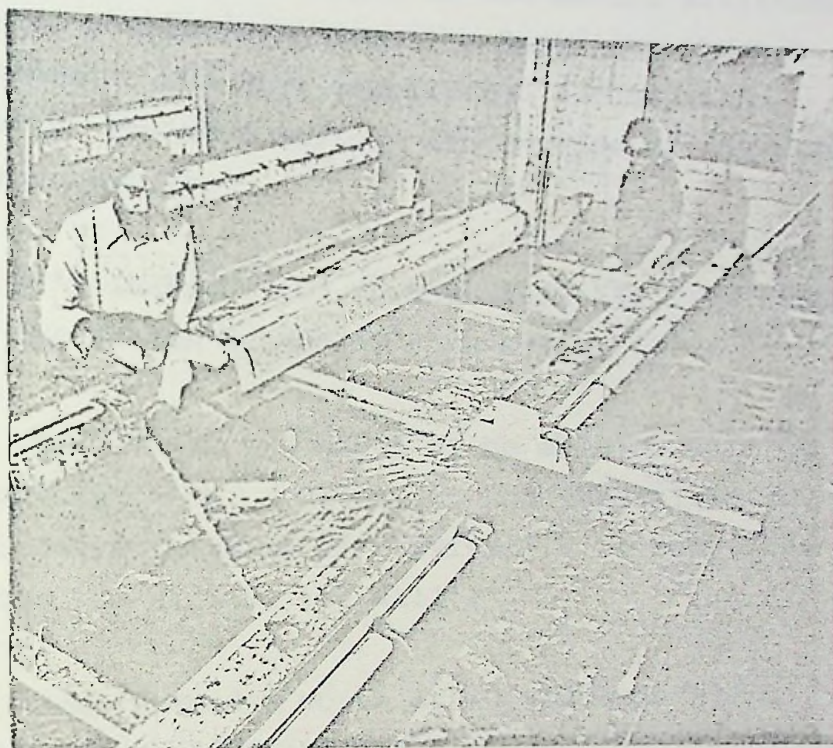


71. OPPENHEIM - MICRO-PROJECTION 1970

The GUARDED LAND MASS project in Wisconsin in 1970 when I hired an armed guard to march around and enclose a rectangular land area,.....and PROTECTION PIECE at the Boston Museum, where I used twelve trained police dogs to keep people away from ground they would normally stand on....

1971/72 The artist chose two drawings, one of the earliest drawings by his daughter, and one of the last by his father who had recently died. Enlarging both drawings to a scale of about 500 ft. on a map, he then plotted POLARITIES on the Long Island flat landscape. Aerial photographs were then taken and displayed in the gallery along with the original drawings the loneliness of the personal artifact and the loneliness of infinite space into which that artifact has been mirrored.

In his 1975 ARTPAK Installations, he sprayed tar on a stubble field, in the vastly enlarged pattern of a fingerprint section - a typical temporary gesture by Oppenheim.



77. Newton HARRISON - LAGOON - SIMULATING MONSOON January 1973
La Jolla, California.

CONCLUSION

I have tried to chronicle the shift in the mental attitudes of those artists, particularly from the Futurists through Duchamp to Oppenheim, who have constituted a consistent counter-current to the more obvious avant-garde of any decade in the Twentieth Century.

From David Antin's Introduction to the EARTH AIR FIRE WATER exhibition at the Boston Museum of Fine Art in 1971:

"We have done too much to the Earth to be able to call it 'Mother' without laughing. But it is not impossible to imagine the elements in terms of survival?...Perhaps it's the outcome of being 'up against the wall'?"

Mirroring Sir Herbert Read's words in introducing Allan Leepa's The Challenge of Modern Art.

"Art is a metaphysical statement that stands for meanings and human equivalents which man feels most directly and truthfully and comprehensively represent him at any particular time.

It is because the modern artist is faced by an existential situation of unparalleled complexity that his art, in attempting to resolve the situation, assumes unfamiliar forms".

From the early Sixties, many movements have been named, declared individuals emerged and disappeared from view again, and vast numbers of works have been made, and have then ceased to exist.

The Happenings

had and have, an orchestrator, certain materials situation, time span.

They exist now in memory, as descriptions in books and in photo-record.

The Events

were generally performed - using materials, space situation, time span. In front of an audience. They exist also in memory, as descriptions in books and in photo-record.

The Performance

is always performed in front of an audience, publicized, in a safe situation (generally) - is repeated on occasion, using the same 'script' 'props' 'soundscore'. Exists afterwards in memory, review and magazine accounts, in photo and video record and in books.

Conceptual Pieces

generally are declared by a written statement of intent. and are either a proposition for a piece, event performance, or a didactic, or thought provoking statement. Photos are often used. The piece exists in memory after the material, written piece has been seen, either in actuality or in reproduction. The piece of information exists materially however.

The Installation

Exists as a solid, or material, arrangement, for the duration of the exhibition. Generally documented, again dismantled so that it ceases to exist except in memory and in documentation.

Real-Time System

Can be an installation (therefore temporary) which may imitate scientific models of growth or physical systems, e.g. water, ice, steam, memory and photodocumentation, preserve traces..

The Documentation
Show

The work has been done elsewhere - the moment of confrontation with the spectator is either avoided, by confrontation with a document, which distances, or recorded - but in any case is second-hand. The actual encounter with the work done elsewhere survives in memory of the real spectator.

Then there is work which is made, and has a planned life-span, but which is NOT destroyed by the artist, but rather is deliberately exposed to natural forces, such as rain, passersby, wind, growth, handling, gravity, time.

The changes in the characteristics of sculpture which have happened in this country,

Static	to	Dynamic
Permanent	to	Ephemeral
Solid	to	Transparent
Occupying Space	to	Defining Space
Carved or Cast	to	Made from any process known to man
Figurative	to	Abstract, Symbolic, finally non-representative - the thing itself.
Unified concept	to	Containing many elements, ideas
Singular	to	Multiple Parts
In one place	to	(possibly) in several locations

I close with a quotation from Caroline Tisdall who writes in her introduction to Beuys's 'Notes for a Secret Block for a Secret Person in Ireland'.

"Change becomes the revolutionary principle that restores the sense of evolution in the individual and points the path to freedom. Change as energy, the reawakening of the awareness of energy fields the invisible forces that exist beyond seeing and hearing. Some of them are as natural as water and air and have to do with matter. Others are mystical, mythical and magical but can find a truer and more modern expression in folklore than in mythology. They are the constant and creative forces of change: and the key to the relationship between man and matter".

BRENDA KELLIHER
1975 - 1979
BRIGHTON - DUBLIN

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