

# Chapter 4

## On Virtual Fluxus

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### ABSTRACT

*Contemporary technologies in art are available from the 1960's. Virtual Fluxus is the result of more than a decade of digital practice events, which give a definition of the online world. This article on Virtual FLUXUS discusses the paradoxes of the Virtual in Contemporary Art. It starts its discussion with a citation from Al Hansen, as: "Fluxus is a Virtual Reality system where the glove doesn't work properly and the helmet doesn't fit. Other things happen than what was intended". In this chapter, the author underlines that when Virtual FLUXUS happened, the gloves and goggles began to work, and when inside, things were more gloriously broken than could have been imagined. In this chapter, there are several examples of virtual artworks from different authors examined.*

### INTRODUCTION

"Virtual FLUXUS happened when we got the glove and goggles working, and when we got inside, we found out that things were more gloriously broken than we could have ever imagined. The universe shattered before us, and it was beautiful." – (Man Michinaga/Patrick Lichty). Events create chain reactions. Stukas fall from the sky, to have their pilots cradled by shamans, and sometimes artists compulsively shop. Events unfold that describe the zeitgeist of an era. This is also, what it was said first akin to FLUXUS also applies to movements in the telling the story of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century through:

*... A mini-encyclopedia of aesthetic alternatives. Concrete poetry--Found structures of text; surrealist dream combinations--of unusual objects and events; futuristic, strong actions and images; Dadaist sense from nonsense; Zen meaning through Anti-Art; Turn -of-the-Century "Art For Art's Sake" becoming Forties and Fifties Anti-Classical-Academic-Understood- Formal Art postures. – Al Hansen*

But that wasn't the end. From the fifties through the seventies, the rise of the Happening to the death of Maciunas, culture witnessed one of the most kaleidoscopic conglomerations of experimental practices in contemporary art; one that is only beginning to be understood at the beginning of the third millennium.

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FLUXUS, like its progenitors, Dada, Surrealism, and others, jammed a wrench in the conceptions of art, life, life-as-art, and art-as-life. It spilled over the edges of a loosely -wrapped Pandora's box, setting loose off a torrent of intent and possibility. But like a poorly behaved child, FLUXUS refuses to be contained or to die quietly with after the death of its progenitors.

The question of death in terms of FLUXUS' death is a sticky matter, as it seeks to inscribe terminal points that it refuses to abide by in the first place. Maciunas' death, for some, was for some the death of FLUXUS, and maybe it was, in the way that the "movement" or "project" was defined as flowing through him through in magazines and elsewhere.

But when Dick Higgins' creation of the Intermedia Venn Diagram defining proposed a relation of an agglomeration of practices, Maciunas' conception of FLUXUS became a subset of this torrent of cultural production, and not a compartmentalization of the whole. So, as Al Hansen mused, with the passing on of Maciunas, in a way FLUXUS died in a way, but it also lives on.

## VIRTUAL FLUXUS' PROTO-CULTURE

Life, a 3D online virtual world (see Figure 1). These included Eva and Franco Mattes, Gazira Babeli, Scott Kildall, Doug Jarvis, Jeremy Owen Turner, Liz Solo, Penny Leong Browne, Tanya Skuce, and myself; all except the Mattes would found the performance group, Second Front (1). Much of this impulse began

*Figure 1. Second Front's "Breaking News"*



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