

George Maciunas's designer identity and the visual language of Fluxus*

George Maciunas'ın tasarımcı kimliği ve Fluxus'un görsel dili

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Abstract

This article explored how the identity of George Maciunas founder and artist of the Fluxus Movement as a designer and architect is reflected in the diverse works by various artists contained within the artist boxes known as Fluxus Box and Fluxkit. The study examined how George Maciunas and other Fluxus artists effectively used the visual and graphic approaches to experimental, chance-based book, typography, album and packaging designs in line with the Fluxus concept of language. The connections with pre-Fluxus 20th-century avant-garde art movements and the influence of these movements on Fluxus founded by George Maciunas in 1961 and active across many European countries, Japan and the United States have been analysed through selected works. Furthermore, the paper considers how George Maciunas's role as a designer in guiding the movement shaped within the context of visual and graphic design, focusing on the works of Yoko Ono and Shigeo Kubota, two key female figures associated with George Maciunas and Fluxus. Based on the findings, it is suggested that within the Fluxus Movement, graphic and visual design elements were utilised in mass-produced works with the support of designer George Maciunas and by Fluxus artists. It is recommended that research be expanded due to the effective use of design elements by George Maciunas and the artists of the Fluxus Movement.

Keywords: Fluxus, george maciunas, graphic, visual design

Öz

Bu makalede, Fluxus Hareketi kurucusu ve sanatçısı olan George Maciunas'ın tasarımcı ve mimar kimliğinin Fluxus Box, Fluxkit adı verilen sanatçı kutularının içinde yer alan sanatçılara ait birbirinden farklı eserlerine ne şekilde yansıdığı incelenmektedir. George Maciunas'la birlikte Fluxus sanatçılarının Fluxus dil anlayışına uygun deneysel, rastlantısal kitap, tipografi, albüm, esambalaj tasarımlarının, görsel ve grafik düzenlemelerini etkin bir biçimde nasıl kullandıkları araştırılmaktadır. Maciunas tarafından 1961 yılında kurulan Fluxus hareketinin 20. Yüzyıl Avangard sanat akımlarıyla bağlantıları ve Avrupa'nın pek çok ülkesi, Almanya, Japonya ve Amerika'daki etkileri eserler üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. George Maciunas'ın tasarımcı kişiliğinin hareketi yönlendirme biçiminin yansımaları, Fluxus'un önemli kadın sanatçılarından Yoko Ono, Shigeo Kubota'nın eserleri görsel ve grafik tasarım bağlamında irdelenmektedir. Elde edilen bulgular doğrultusunda, Fluxus Hareketi'nde tasarımcı George Maciunas'ın desteğiyle, Fluxus sanatçılarının grafik ve görsel tasarımları seri üretim eserlerinde kullandıkları düşünülmektedir. George Maciunas ve Fluxus Hareketi sanatçılarının, tasarım unsurlarını etkin kullanmaları nedeniyle, araştırmaların genişletilmesi önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Fluxus, george maciunas, grafik, görsel tasarım

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Introduction

Whilst societies grappled with major confrontations, deprivations and crises, 20th-century art and artists also underwent transformations and metamorphoses in tandem with the internal dynamics of society and nations. Artists acted as pioneers of change, seeking renewal and reconstruction within social dynamics. As Artun notes in Bürger's Theory of the Avant-Garde that the term 'Avant-garde' originally meant 'the vanguard of an army or a unit'; during the utopian period of the 1830s–1840s, however, it entered political discourse and began to be used to denote the standard-bearers of radical transformations. (Artun, 2003, p.10). The First and Second World Wars drove artists into different countries and cultures, contributing to their undertaking numerous initiatives aimed at revealing their individuality. This situation led them to establish diverse intellectual, visual and ideological structures across many fields. As economic crises resulting from the wars made class divisions and privileges even more pronounced, the number of artists feeling the need to react against luxury and privileged statuses, to rid themselves of excesses, to present art differently, to subvert, and to proclaim their ideologies has steadily increased. Fluxus emerged as a movement that successfully incorporated various art movements interacting with one another during the Second World War, focusing on unconventional applications 15 years after the war's end. In the Fluxus movement, where actions were never considered separate from socio-political struggles, artists created their works by drawing inspiration from modes of transport, everyday objects, means of communication, and even the streets themselves. They regarded any setting as a potential platform for artistic expression and their underlying concepts, and they actively staged exhibitions, installations, and performances. Some works existed, or perhaps ceased to exist as one-off performance pieces that left their mark only on the timeline of time. In contrast to Futurism's anti-feminist stance, powerful female artists such as the Japanese artist Yoko Ono (1933), Shigeko Kubota (1937–2015), and the American

artist Carla Liss (1944–2012) played a significant role in the formation of Fluxus. Records and correspondence show that George Maciunas primarily provided design support for the works of female artists under the Fluxus umbrella. "By transforming art from merely an aesthetic production space into a structure open to audience participation, experimental in nature and free from commercial concerns, Fluxus played a significant role in shaping the understanding of contemporary art." (Uzunonut, Beller 2025, p.377) Independent of the materialist view that sees art as a means of making money, they sought to transform numerous spaces into stages or exhibition areas where everyone could create art and express themselves as part of a movement. In this context, they reflected and performed their artistic vision on a natural platform that even encompassed days significant in the natural cycle of human life. The 1978 wedding of George Maciunas illustrates this philosophy, blurring the boundary between art and life. The desire to break away from the artistic concepts of the 19th century and earlier, which began to develop in the post-World War I and during World War II periods, is a key factor in Fluxus's stance against conventional thinking, alongside the significant artists and movements of 20th-century art.

George Maciunas, who attended Cage's experimental composition classes at the New School of Social Research in New York, stated, "We took the idea of concreteness and noise from Futurism and Russolo. We took the idea of ready-made objects from Marcel Duchamp and the idea of collage from the Dadaists. All of these culminated in John Cage. (Antmen, 2024, p.204).

This statement highlights the points of inspiration. To understand portable artist kits such as Water Yam, Fluxkit and Flux Box, which feature in Fluxus works, within the context of art and graphic design, one must look back to Futurism and Luigi Russolo, who was active within this art movement, Marcel Duchamp's works "Green Box" and "Box in The Valise" pioneering the use of ready-made objects and the Dadaist movement's nonconformist stance and works based on the collage principle. This approach enables a clear understanding of

Fluxus's and its artists' objectives, as well as the reasons behind their strong desire to stand apart from other movements. The care George Maciunas and his fellow artists devoted to Fluxus's visual identity, their efforts to evaluate each work individually, and their design philosophies which fluctuate within the flow of life, reflect their examination of the movements and trends that preceded them. This study examines how George Maciunas's identity as a designer shaped Fluxus's visual language. For George Maciunas, it was not only the visual language of his designs that mattered, but also their functional characteristics of the works. He produced his designs as portable, accessible, three-dimensional objects. His aim in his work was to support social change and to emphasise that anyone could create art. Consequently, the accessibility and functionality of the works became fundamental objectives of his endeavours within the Fluxus movement. It is evident that George Maciunas, with his identity as a contemporary designer who actively utilised design within the context of the art movement, exerted a guiding influence within the Fluxus movement.

Method

In this study, a literature review and qualitative research methods were employed to examine the historical development of visual and graphic elements within 20th-century avant-garde art practices, with a focus on the Fluxus Movement. The study utilised a source review method to explore George Maciunas's identity as an artist and designer, his publications, and his approach to poster and graphic design. Yoko Ono, one of Fluxus's key female artists, conveyed messages on a universal scale through her works. Shigeeko Kubota, meanwhile, produced works aligned with the aims of the Fluxus movement through her series of productions. The artists' publications, artist books, performances and documentation were interpreted using the visual text analysis method, alongside findings obtained from secondary sources. The result-

ing insights into graphic and visual design were assessed holistically using visual sources and written texts.

Objective

George Maciunas sought to challenge the unique and inaccessible nature of artworks within the Fluxus Movement, aiming to facilitate the widespread dissemination of works through mass production and to make them more accessible within everyday life. For him, art was an integral part of life—open and attainable to everyone. By employing graphic principles such as visual language, typography, and iconography in the transformation of works into mass-produced items, he ensured that these works reached the general public at an affordable price. This study evaluates how Fluxus emerged, in line with George Maciunas's objectives, and the influences of avant-garde art movements linked to the transformed mindset have been evaluated. Through the artists' works, the Serrata of Futurism, Marcel Duchamp's "Green Box", "Box in The Valise" and his Ready-Mades, and the influence of the Dada art movement's collage logic on designs have been examined. The study aims to investigate the influence of George Maciunas's identity as a designer on Fluxus and the intellectual contributions made by the works of significant female artists involved in this movement.

Limitations

This study is limited to examining the formation process of Fluxus, its visual and graphic language, and the traces of its socio-political framework through the works of selected avant-garde art movements and artists. In this context, while Futurism, Marcel Duchamp and the Dada movement which emerged during the First and Second World Wars are treated as the principal elements directly influencing Fluxus, other avant-garde movements and artistic practices have been excluded from the scope of this research. Because Fluxus often relies on performance and ephemeral processes, the re-

search imposes a limitation that may lead to differing interpretations of Fluxus practices. Consequently, the analysis of Fluxus's visual archives necessitates reliance on secondary documents and historical sources. George Maciunas's graphic works, alongside those of Yoko Ono and Shigeo Kubota, have been examined in accordance with the information available in existing archives and literature. In her work, Yoko Ono realistically questions the relationship between art and everyday life. Consequently, she has strived to convey her artistic messages to a wider audience by producing works that define the boundaries between politics and society in support of world peace. Kubota, a pioneer of video art within Fluxus, reflected its principles through her series of works through her series of pieces; she was later appointed Vice-President of Fluxus by George Maciunas. The scope of this article has been defined by including selected representative works by both female artists.

Movements Influencing George Maciunas and the Fluxus Movement:

1. Futurism and Luigi Russolo

Futurism originated in Italy with the Manifesto published by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876–1944) in 1909. Following the First World War, the relationship established between Marinetti and Mussolini marked a second phase in which Futurism's artistic philosophy evolved into a political identity.

"The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" is one of the most radical statements in the history of art and literature. In this text, which extols the passion for danger, fearlessness, courage, boldness, rebellion, and aggression, war is regarded as the world's only hygiene. (Erden, 2023, p.195).

Futurist artists not only produced works across many fields of art including photography, visual arts, and music but also organised 'Seratas'. These soirées, similar to contemporary performances, were highly sought after and attracted considerable interest from both society and the art world.



Figure 1. Umberto Boccioni, Futurist Serata (Futurist Evening in Milan), 1910. Ink on paper. From Erden (2023, p.203).

In 1910, Marinetti sent his book "Le Futurisme" free of charge to twenty thousand people living in various European cities, distributing it by post in a manner similar to Fluxus's mail-art campaigns. In 1914, he published the book "Zang Tumb Tumb", in which Filippo Tommaso Marinetti recounts the 1912 Balkan War from his own perspective, having been personally involved in it. Notable features of the work include his attempt to convey the atmosphere of war and the sound of mechanical weapons by infusing movement into the text, using capital and lowercase letters of varying sizes, and employing typographical effects.



Figure 2. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Zang Tumb Tumb: Adrianopoli Ottobre 1912: Parole in Libertà (1914). From The Museum of Modern Art. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/31450>

Alongside textual experimentation, Futurism pursued a fusion of music and visual art. The desire to merge music with visual art appears to have been a particular endeavour of the Italian Luigi Russolo (1885–1947), a pioneer of Futurist music

and one of the movement's key artists in the 1900s.

In 1913, one of the leading painters of the Futurist movement, Russolo, began to focus on music instead of painting and wrote a manifesto on the subject. Together with painter Ugo Piatti (1885-1953), he began designing musical instruments to create new sounds that reflected modern life. Carra became fascinated with synaesthesia and began to ponder the relationship between sound, smell, and painting. Severini approached colour and light from a different perspective, focusing on paintings that emphasised movement and speed and tended towards abstraction. (Erden, 2023, p. 199).

Russolo's *L'Arte dei rumori* (The Art of Noise, 1913) demonstrated his commitment to reconstructing the chaos of urban soundscapes. George Maciunas later recognised the rhythmic and concrete structures established by John Cage—key to Fluxus music—as fundamental to his own graphic compositions, which echo Cage's rhythmic aesthetics (Figure 3).

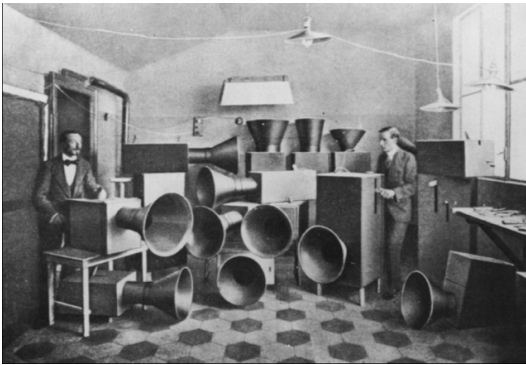


Figure 3. Luigi Russolo, *Inventing Abstraction, 1910–1925: Luigi Russolo's Noise Music*. The Museum of Modern Art. <https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/175/2320>

2. Marcel Duchamp and Ready-Made

Born in Ballainville-Crevon in 1887, Marcel Duchamp was among the artists who experimented with various art movements during the First and Second World Wars. His early works, produced during what he termed a retinal period constrained by traditional conventions, were mainly paintings

on canvas. “He subsequently explored fields such as Post-Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism” (Antmen, 2024: 204) From 1911 onwards, his desire to move away from representational art began to emerge during the period when he was creating Cubist works. Marcel Duchamp enjoyed a highly active reputation within the Dada movement. He produced works based on the ‘ready-made’ concept, the most notable of which is the infamous “Fontaine”, the original of which is lost. The use of ready-made objects by George Maciunas and other Fluxus artists reflects Duchamp's influence on the movement.

In Paris in 1934: You made the Green Box: Three hundred examples containing ninety-three photographic documents, drawings and handwritten notes from the years 1911–1915, reproduced with photographs, including twenty deluxe copies. Rose Selavy Editions, 18 rue de la Paix. Another example of your constant preoccupation: collecting and preserving your work: “Yes. Everything I did required delicate work over a sufficiently long period; I realised it was worth the effort to preserve it. I worked slowly; consequently, I accorded it the same importance as anything else that had been treated with great care”. At that time, you seem more concerned with preserving your work than continuing it: “Yes, because I had long since stopped doing anything”. Did you stop completely?: “Yes, but not entirely. I had simply stopped. That's all”. ‘Box in the Valise’ comes a little later: “from 1938 to 1942,” and ‘Green Box’ from 1934 onwards’. What is the difference between the two?: “One is green, as the name suggests, and contains papers, all arranged exactly as I wanted them. I preserved the original shape of the paper. As for ‘Box in the Valise’, I had to make the frame, the compartments, the drawers, and so on. It was a considerable amount of work in addition to the 68 reproductions. (Eroğlu, 2022, pp.48-49)

George Maciunas's portable ‘Fluxkit’ and ‘Fluxbox’ artist's boxes appear to draw direct inspiration from Duchamp's ‘Box in the Valise’ and ‘Green Box’. The concept of compartments and drawers in George Maciunas's box designs bears a resemblance to Duchamp's works.



Figure 4. Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Green Box) (La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même [Boîte verte], 1934)*. The Museum of Modern Art. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/32347>

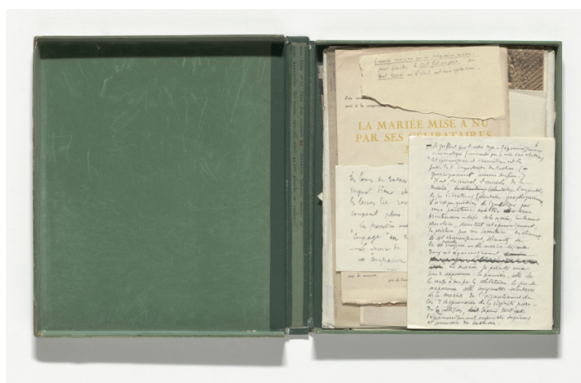


Figure 5. Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Green Box) (La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même [Boîte verte], 1934)*. The Museum of Modern Art. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/32347>

3. Dadaism and Collages

“Cabaret Voltaire”, opened in 1916 in a backstreet of Zurich by the German poet and thinker Hugo Ball (1886–1927), was a venue that combined the features of a nightclub and an art space. This is where Dada began. Like other young émigré artists in Zurich, Ball sought to create a space for anti-war collaboration and solidarity. (Antmen, 2024, p. 121).

The Dada movement also stands out for its conflicting manifestos and artists who were often at odds with one another. Tristan Tzara (1896–1963) is notable not only as a poet but also for the intensity of his collage works incorporating typography

produced for Dada. He designed most of these works in a manner that defied conventional typesetting and printing arrangements, giving them the appearance of experimental collages. His invitations and posters mix serif and sans-serif fonts, irregular cases, and nonlinear arrangements, creating an intentionally chaotic visual language.



Figure 6. Tristan Tzara, *Poster for the Exhibition Salon Dada: Exposition Internationale, Galerie Montaigne, Paris (1921)*. The Museum of Modern Art. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/280315>

Dada artists rejected war, bourgeois norms, and the elitism of traditional art. Dada works feature haphazardly arranged poems, collages, montages, and texts formed by the random juxtaposition of meaningless words. Raoul Hausmann (1886–1971) created posters that, while featuring Dada-style graphic icons and symbols, employed unconventional typographic layouts — with the irregular use of lowercase and uppercase letters, along with punctuation marks selected randomly during typesetting — resulting in texts that convey no meaning as word.

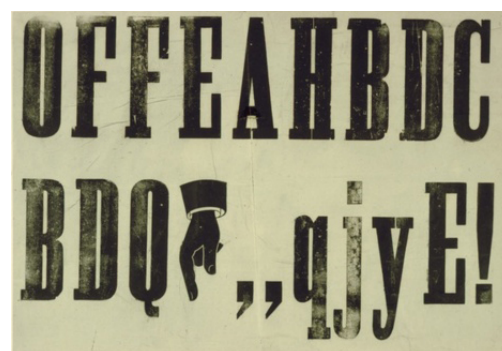


Figure 7. Raoul Hausmann, *OFFFEAH, Typographical Arrangement, Poster Poem (1918)*. Berlinische Galerie. <https://berlinischegalerie.de/en/press-release/raoul-hausmann/>

Max Ernst (1891–1976), Angelika Hoerle (1899–1923), Heinrich Hoerle (1895–1936), Johannes T. Baargeld (1892–1927) and Otto Freundlich (1878–1943) created the cover for the *Manifeste W 5*, exemplifying collage techniques later influential for Fluxus.



Figure 8. Max Ernst, *Manifeste W 5 (Weststupidien 5) III. Manifesto, jacket maquette (1920)*. Art Basel. <https://www.artbasel.com/catalog/art-work/52791/Max-Ernst-Manifeste-W-5-Weststupidien-5-III-Manifesto-jacket-maquette>

Findings

George Maciunas and the Fluxus Movement

The term Fluxus was first coined in 1961 by George Maciunas (Antmen 2024, p.203). Born in Lithuania, George Maciunas (1931–1978) was an architect, designer, publisher, and organiser. In addition to being the founder of Fluxus, he served as its guiding figure and emerged as a key artist within the movement. Historical records from The Museum of Modern Art (2013) indicate that, like many avant-garde artists before him, he was shaped by the experience of war and its social consequences. Following the Soviet army's occupation of Lithuania in 1944, his family fled to Frankfurt am Main, Germany; four years later, in 1948, they settled in Levittown, Long Island, in the United States. Maciunas received training in graphic design and architecture at the Cooper Union School of Art (1949–1952) and completed further studies in architecture and music at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, earning a degree in 1955. He later studied art history at New York University (1955–1959). He worked for a time as an architect and later as a graphic designer, specialising in his professional practice. In 1963, Maciunas published his first

Fluxus manifesto in the form of a collage, featuring paragraphs written in white typewriter font on a black background, with explanations arranged in pencil beneath them. In the Fluxus Manifesto, he describes the commercialised professionalism of the bourgeoisie as a disease. He viewed dead, imitative, and artificial art, as well as abstract and illusionist art, as elements that needed to be purged. With the phrase 'PURGE THE WORD "EUROPANISM"!', he clarified his stance against Europe and its commercialised concept of art.

Among the artists associated with Fluxus were American composer John Cage (1912–1992), Korean artist Nam June Paik (1932–2006), Japanese artists Yoko Ono (1933) and Shigeo Kubota (1935–2015), German artist Joseph Beuys (1921–1986), and American artist Ken Friedman (1949) and George Brecht (1926–2008). All contributed to the Fluxus philosophy through their works, events, and artist's books. Due to the movement's multidimensional and experimental nature, its works require analysis that considers both conceptual content and changing spatial contexts.

The differences within Fluxus have made it difficult to frame us all as "Fluxus people." Art has been a default frame, one that is only occasionally appropriate. Compressing the larger laboratory into that frame means that a great deal about Fluxus has been missed. What Fluxus was and perhaps remains is the most productive laboratory of ideas in the history of art, an invisible college whose field of study encompasses the essential questions of life. (Friedman 2011, p. 40).

Generally, the kits, game boxes, invitations, brochures, stamps and similar items were designed by George Maciunas. Sales of the works are conducted through the Fluxus Shop and by post. He developed systematic approaches for producing labels, alongside packaging, boxing, and the use of variable logos, all in keeping with his own design dynamics. The graphic and visual designs of the works by artists in the Fluxus Movement were predominantly created by George Maciunas. His designs are characterised by a clean, clear and orderly page layout. Typography, print arrangement, and overall quality are of great importance in label

and packaging designs. A work-coding system developed by George Maciunas to facilitate the tracking of works within the Fluxus Movement is utilised, and he personally oversees the tracking of these works. George Maciunas played an active role in shaping artistic activities within Fluxus. According to Hendricks (1988), in his commentary, in which he mentioned the possibility that the Adhesive Toilet Seat by Paul Sharits in the Flux Toilet could be a work by Maciunas, he expressed the view that Maciunas might sometimes have assigned his own ideas to another artist.

Collective Fluxus Year Box 2

"Fluxus Year Box 2" is a wooden box featuring compartments designed to solicit contributions to another collective anthology containing works and projects by Fluxus artists. Like the others, this box serves as a portable artist's kit. It is intended to facilitate the transport and display of the works. In his call for ideas, Maciunas states that the reader's involvement will be limited to the activities they automatically undertake while examining the book or box. The Fluxus Year Box 2 functions as a toolbox-like structure containing Ben Vautier's *The Postman's Choice* postcard, Shigeko Kubota's Flux medical capsules, and performative elements such as Flux seeds and bouquets. Furthermore, as Maciunas also produced film content under the name Flux Films, he integrated numerous short film strips with an audio-visual dimension, along with a hand-cranked viewer used for watching films, into the Fluxus Year Box 2. Figure 9 shows a sketch by George Maciunas for the Collective Fluxus Year Box 2, featuring an example drawing that illustrates what might be included and notes reminders regarding this.

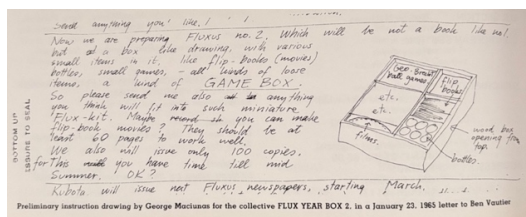


Figure 9. George Maciunas's draft drawing for Collective Fluxus Year Box 2 (1965) (Hendricks, 1988, p. 122, Silverman No. 125).

The "Flux Year Box" logotype combines serif and sans-serif fonts in a structured composition. The illustration and label design on the cover of the work titled "A Flux CORSAGE" by the American artist Ken Friedman which utilises various seeds for planting and which is housed within the wooden box, was also created by George Maciunas. George Maciunas's presence as a designer is also evident in numerous works contained within Flux kits, bags, and suitcases. This suggests that he acted effectively as an Art Director and took on responsibility to realise the ideas of the Fluxus artists.



Figure 10. George Maciunas, Collective Fluxus Year Box 2, 1965. Photograph by Brad Iverson. From Hendricks (1988, p. 123, Silverman No. 125).

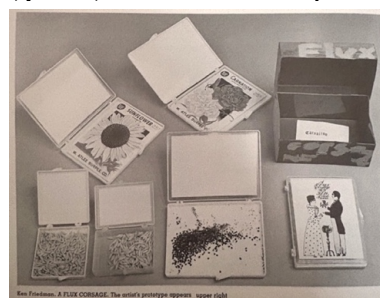


Figure 11. Ken Friedman, A Flux Corsage Photograph by Brad Iverson. From Hendricks (1988, p. 254, Silverman No. 142, ff).

U.S.A Surpasses All the Genocide Records

George Maciunas's 1966 poster, 'The USA Has Broken All Genocide Records!', produced using offset printing and making effective use of graphic elements, is particularly striking. The poster was designed as a response to the political stance of the United States during the Vietnam War (1955–1975). Maciunas transforms percentage data into the stripes of the American flag, conveying his critique indirectly. The stars are replaced with skull

pictograms—symbols commonly associated with danger—while the numerical data is presented as a structured visual diagram using sans-serif typography. This work exemplifies how Maciunas combines artistic expression with graphic design to articulate a socio-political position. Hendricks (1988) notes that images of death replace the stars, while genocide statistics form the stripes. The poster was widely distributed and has also been reproduced in books on political posters of that era. Maciunas reportedly preferred the work to remain anonymous in order to observe its public impact.

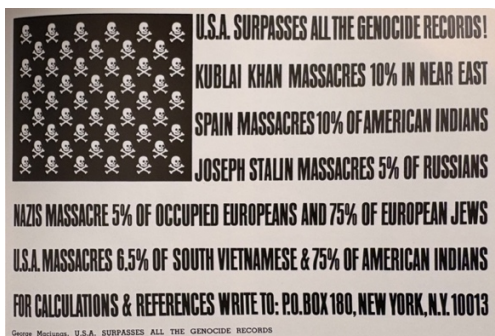


Figure 12. George Maciunas. *U.S.A. surpasses all the genocide records*, Fluxnewsletter, 1968. *The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection*, From Hendricks (1988, p. 391).

Grapefruit

Although Yoko Ono is not officially registered as a Fluxus artist, it is evident that she participated in Fluxus events and produced works associated with the movement. The poster for her 1960 experimental music event appears to have been created without professional printing techniques; it combines newspaper collage, promotional elements, and hand-applied painted text. Although this event predates Yoko Ono's book which consists of instructions with a cover designed by George Maciunas it serves as an example of her early-period performances. *Ay-O's Finger Boxes* (1964) explores holes, voids, and spatial perception. Harran (2020) argues that the "different body" in Fluxus becomes visible through Maciunas's transformation of the void motif into photographic artist portraits. These works position the body at the threshold of space, raising questions about visibility and physical boundaries.

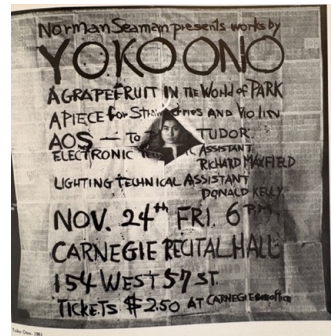


Figure 13. Yoko Ono, *Event Poster with George Maciunas Photographic Portrait* (1961). *The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection*, From Hendricks (1988, p. 415).



Figure 14. Yoko Ono, *Grapefruit* (book cover; designed by George Maciunas, 1964). From *The Museum of Modern Art*. <https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/15/375>

In the 1964 cover design of *Grapefruit*, Maciunas uses handwriting instead of standard typography. The centred title leans toward the spine, diverging from conventional design principles. This placement introduces a deliberate visual tension, as positioning text close to the spine is technically challenging in print production. The design conceptually aligns with the book's content, which consists of poetic instructions inviting reader participation.

Flux Napkins

Flux Napkins (1967) by Shigeo Kubota is another work designed by George Maciunas. Within the Fluxus movement, works that appear random yet contain an element of experimentation take centre stage as pieces that translate a socio-political stance into action. The work consists of collages of noses, eyes and mouths cut from magazines and placed on the red napkins contained within the box. The box, sold separately, appeared in Fluxkit and in events such as Flux-Feast, which were presented

as performances. The Flux-Feast event consisted of performance-based meals presented as a reaction to the bourgeoisie's understanding of art, their transformation of works into luxury art objects, and their appropriation of them. In this respect, Flux Napkins aligns with the Fluxus conceptual approach to art.

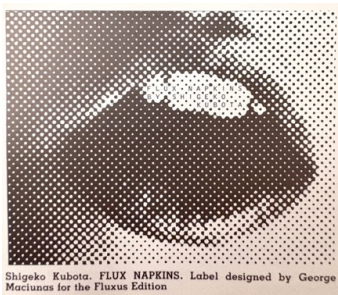


Figure 15. Shigeo Kubota, *Flux Napkins* (designed by George Maciunas; *Silverman No. 228, ff*). From Hendricks (1988, p. 307).

The text 'Flux Napkins' and 'Shigeo Kubota' is positioned atop a halftone magazine image. Care has been taken to ensure that the title of the work and the artist's name blend seamlessly with the photograph. A light sans-serif font interacts visually with the halftone dots, producing an optical effect. The use of black-and-white imagery also resonates with Kubota's identity as a video artist. This work reflects key Fluxus principles: mass production, accessibility, and collage strategies influenced by Dada.



Figure 16. Shigeo Kubota, *Flux Napkins* (designed by George Maciunas). Plastic box with offset label, containing three paper napkins with collage additions (1967). From The Museum of Modern Art. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/128093>

Conclusion

Fluxus artists, who produced their major works between 1960 and 1970, used elements of everyday life to express their ideas, perceptions, and critiques of art. To express their artistic philosophy, Fluxus artists produced and distributed ready-made objects, performances, films, music, publications, and graphic works. They opposed the view of art as a commercial activity, aimed to engage directly with society, and emphasised that anyone could create art. Fluxus artists transformed the works they produced from design to printing into promotional, communicative and playful tools with the aim of reaching the public. George Maciunas and Fluxus artists developed a distinct approach to graphic and visual design within late avant-garde movements. As the themes explored in Fluxus remain relevant today, further research is needed to better understand the details emphasised by the artists. George Maciunas makes effective use of graphic and visual language in the design of his Fluxus works. Based on the findings of the research, it is evident that the design philosophy of George Maciunas and the Fluxus Movement artists differs from that of other art movements. Further research should explore their contributions to design and assess their influence on contemporary artistic and design practices.

Declarations

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval: This study does not involve human participants, animal subjects, or sensitive data; therefore, formal ethical approval was not required. The study was prepared in accordance with the principles of research and publication ethics.

Data Availability: The data supporting the findings of this study are derived from publicly available

sources, including museum archives, published books, and academic literature cited in the references.

Author Contributions: Boray Şen conducted the literature review, collected and analysed the visual and archival data, and drafted the manuscript. Ayşe Öztürk contributed to the conceptual framework, supervised the research process, and critically reviewed and revised the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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