

A Postmodern beginning: Happenings, Fluxus and the beginnings of Performance art, and Video art, as critique of art-as-object

focus on: -Allan Kaprow -Nam June Paik

Post-1965, much art can be loosely defined as “conceptual”

“Conceptual”

Postminimalism and process art

Site-Specific works-
“sculpture in the expanded field,”
Earthworks, *Splittings*

Conceptual art
movement proper-
Minimalism and readymades

Body art

**Fluxus, Happenings,
Performance art**



Jackson Pollock, *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)*, 1950, oil on canvas. Abstract Expressionism
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7blCqvmKL5s> A fragment (going on a loop) of the film of Jackson Pollock painting - shot by Hans Namuth (1950) and released as "Jackson Pollock 51" (1951).

Kaprow's modern straddling postmodern influences!



Jasper Johns, *Target with Four Faces*, 1950s, encaustic on newspaper and collage on canvas with objects, surmounted by four plaster faces. Assemblage and Abstract Expressionism



Allan Kaprow, *An Apple Shrine*, 1960, "Environment"

Performance art, A Postmodern beginning

One of his "Environments"- works were conceived for the very purpose of experience by viewers who had "to wend their way through massive accumulations of junk and debris. 'Now I just simply filled the whole gallery up,' he maintained, 'starting from one wall and ending with the other. When you opened the door, you found yourself in the midst of an entire Environment fabricated out of all sorts of materials'..." ("Subject as Object," 196)

“What is a Happening? A game, an adventure, a number of activities engaged in by participants for the sake of playing.” – Allan Kaprow

“Happening” - a cooperative event in which viewers become active participants in partly planned, partly spontaneous performances that combine loose scenarios and considerable improvisation; first used by Kaprow



Allan Kaprow, *Yard*, 1961, View of the courtyard of Martha Jackson Gallery, 1961, “Happening”, Performance art, Postmodern beginning

Transforms viewer's experience from passive to active engagement with the space- viewers become participants – they found street trash as works of art, showing the influence of Duchamp's readymades. Art as experience!

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.



Allan Kaprow, *The Courtyard*, 1962, “Happening”

Staged on three consecutive nights at a NYC hotel on Bleecker St. “downtown,” mostly for transients; involved spectators helping to clean the courtyard, man on bicycle riding through the crowd, dishes breaking on the courtyard floor; a fable showing the ascension of a goddess in the guise of a teenage girl, dressed in a nightgown and carrying a transistor radio blaring the latest hits.



Allan Kaprow, *Household*, 1964, at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, “Happening”

Household reinvented!

<http://www.moca.org/kaprow/index.php/category/household/>

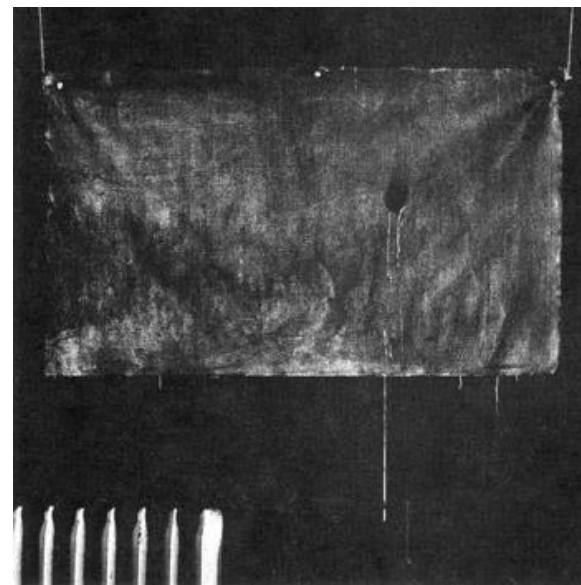
Fluxus “event cards,” **instructions** for work of art- precursor of Conceptual art and Conceptual Performance art



George Brecht, *Water Yam*, first edition, 1963; box designed by George Maciunas

Fluxus “event cards”; performance script becomes an artform and embraces chance!

(Includes event card for “Drip Music; A source of dripping water and an empty vessel are arranged so that the water falls into the vessel, January 1962”; Maciuna printed it on an orange card.)



Yoko Ono, *Smoke Painting*, 1961

“Smoke Painting: Light canvas or any finished painting with a cigarette at any time for any length of time. See the smoke movement. The painting ends when the whole Canvas or painting is gone. 1961 summer”



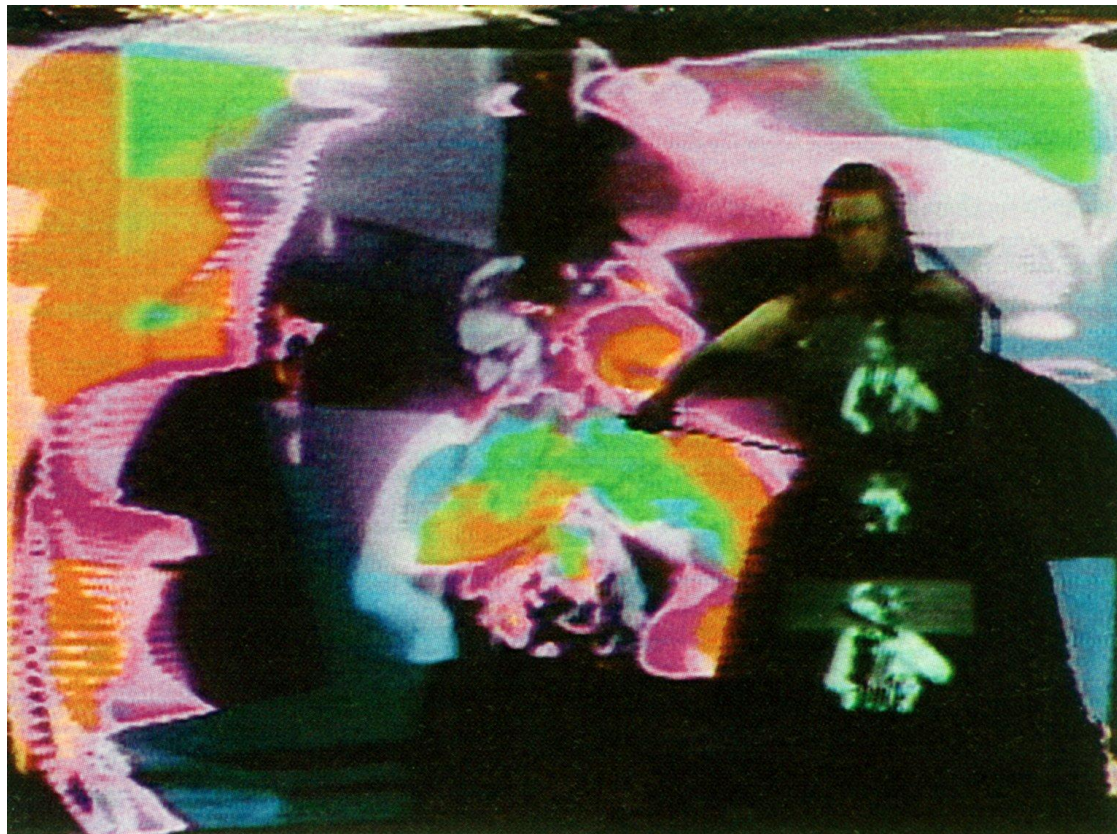
Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*, 1965, enlarged dictionary definition of the word chair and **instructions-instructions are something like:** find one real chair in the site, take one photograph of the real chair and print it to scale with the real chair and display them as instructed

Kosuth claims the sole purpose of art should consist of “presenting new propositions as to art’s nature” (Sandler, 72)

Paik doing
a violin solo
raised it very slowly (about 5 min)
in concentrated manner & then
BANG!



Nam June Paik, *One for Violin*, 1962, Fluxus
Performance art, Postmodern beginning



Nam June Paik, *Global Groove*, 1973, Performance/Video art, Postmodern beginning

Rapid shift from rock-and-roll dance sequences to Allen Ginsberg to Charlotte Moorman with the TV cello to an oriental dancer to John Cage to a Navaho drummer to a Living Theatre performance. Throughout, the video image was manipulated by layering images, creating evolving abstract forms. Rapid edits of words and movements and seemingly random shifts in the backgrounds against which the dancers perform create a dreamlike sense of time and space.

A Postmodern beginning: Body art as critique of art-as-object

focus on: -Vito Acconci -Bruce Nauman



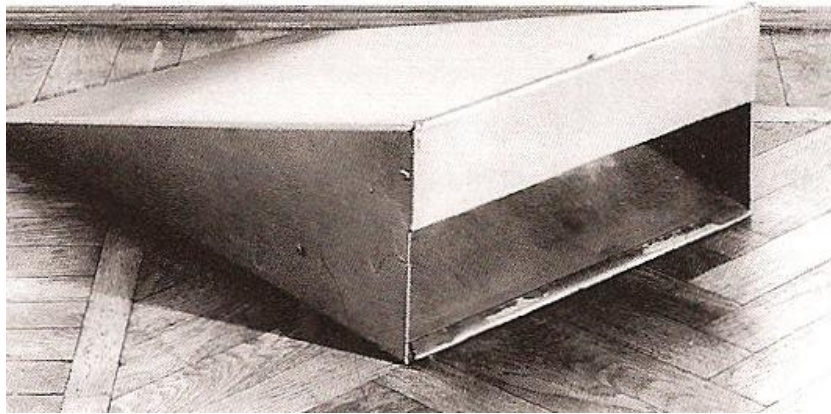
Vito Acconci, *Following Piece*, 1969, Body art/Performance art, Postmodern beginning



Vito Acconci, *Trademarks*, 1970, Body art/Performance art, Postmodern beginning



Vito Acconci, *Seedbed*, 1972, Sonnabend Gallery, New York, Body art/Performance art, Postmodern beginning



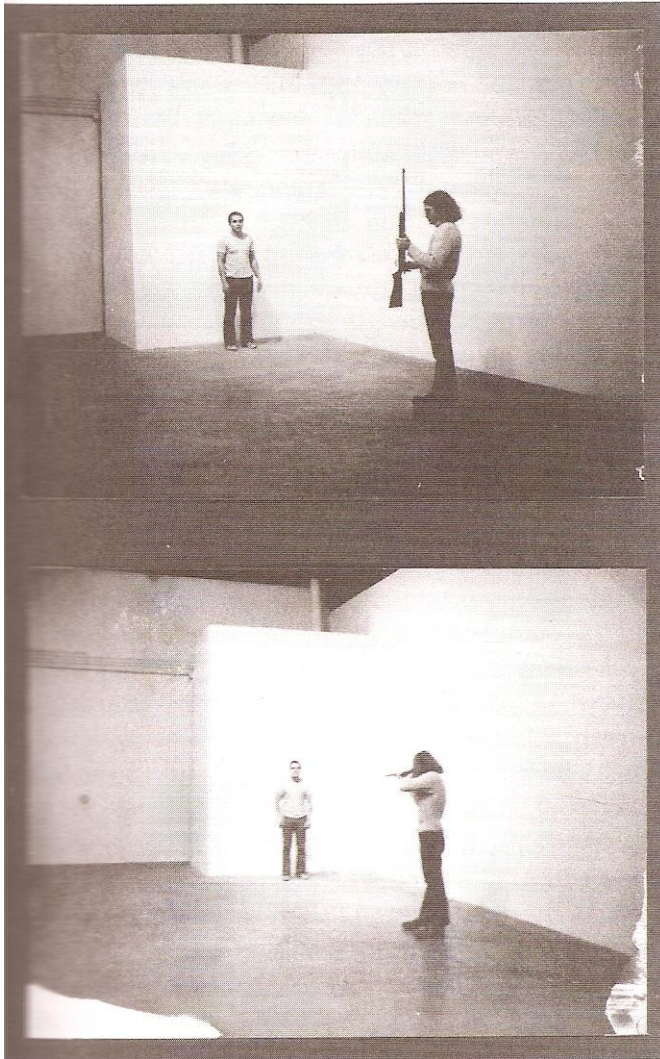
Bruce Nauman, *Device to Stand In*, 1966,
Conceptual art, Postmodern beginning



Bruce Nauman, *Self Portrait as a Fountain*, 1966-67, his photograph of his performative Body art, Conceptual art, Postmodern beginning

Many Conceptual artists used their bodies as artistic medium in simple activities – designates himself a work of art (Duchampian urinal reference) – artist's own body replaces the mass-produced object; subject becomes object!

Bruce Nauman, *Live-Taped Video Corridor*, 1970,
Conceptual Body art, Postmodern beginning
“As opposed to being viewers *of* the work, once again
they are viewers *in* it.” (“Subject as Object,” p. 199)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lrqXiqgQBo>



Chris Burden, *Shoot*, 1970, Performance art, Body art, Postmodern beginning

Bullet wounds document event along with photography, audio



Chris Burden, *Five Day Locker Piece*, 1971, Performance art,
Body art, Postmodern beginning

Image of the lockers he lived in for five consecutive days

All these post-1965 movements under the “conceptual art” umbrella-

Postminimalism or process art, Site Specific works, Conceptual art movement proper, Performance art, Body Art and all combinations thereof-

move the practice of art away from art-as-autonomous object, and art-as-commodification, and towards

art-as-experience, where subject becomes object, hierarchy between subject and object is critiqued and intersubjectivity of artist, viewer and artwork abounds!