



Anonymous, Untitled (Activating Fluxus), 2021. Artistic appropriation of George Maciunas' Fluxus Monogram Cards, ca. 1964.

Activating Fluxus

This research project investigates the objects, events, scores and ephemera that emerged in the spirit of Fluxus in the 1960s–70s in Switzerland, Europe, the UK and the USA. Inherently fluctuating by definition, Fluxus rejects any stable, material form. Considering the transitory aspects of Fluxus forms not destined for preservation, and looking through a multidisciplinary lens of conservation, art history, performance studies, heritage studies and museology, our project will advance novel strategies for activating Fluxus through the reconstruction, adaptation and artistic reinterpretation of Fluxus forms.

Dieses Forschungsprojekt untersucht Objekte, Events, Partituren und Ephemera, die im Geiste von Fluxus in den 1960er- bis 1970er-Jahren in der Schweiz, Europa, UK und den USA entstanden sind. Per Definition flüchtig, lehnt Fluxus eine stabile, materielle Form ab. Unter Berücksichtigung der vergänglichen Aspekte von Fluxus-Formen, die nicht für die Konservierung bestimmt sind, und durch einen multidisziplinären Blick aus Konservierung, Kunstgeschichte, Performance Studies, Heritage Studies und Museologie, entwickelt unser Projekt neue Strategien zur Aktivierung von Fluxus durch die Rekonstruktion, Adaption und künstlerische Neuinterpretation von Fluxus-Formen.

Introduction: Activating Fluxus centres on the lives and afterlives of Fluxus objects, events and ephemera created in the 1960s–70s in Switzerland, Europe, the UK and the US. Fluxus transformed creative practice for good, not least by questioning the dominant preconception of the artwork as something that endures unchanged. Inherently fluctuating by definition, the creative outputs of Fluxus reject any stable, material form. While many histories of the post-war avant-garde focus on the implications of nascent conceptualism and performativity for other artistic genres, the proposed project considers the fundamentally transitory aspects of Fluxus forms not destined for preservation. By seeking new ways to engage with the legacy of Fluxus through the lens of conservation, art history, performance studies, heritage studies and museology, this project examines the possibility of activating Fluxus, challenged as it is by its paradoxical coexistence of ephemerality and materiality, with implications for how we conceive of changeable artworks that emerged after the 1960s.

Methods and results: The project has three principal aims: (I) Using examples of collections and individual artworks held in Switzerland and abroad, the project reviews, catalogues, evaluates and systematises the current strategies for exhibiting, conserving and documenting Fluxus. (II) By means of a theoretical investigation of the notions of authenticity, changeability and intentionality and the role they play in the continuing life of Fluxus intermedia, (III) the project advances new strategies for activating Fluxus works through (a) the reconstruction, (b) the adaptation and (c) the artistic reinterpretation of Fluxus forms.

Project Head:
Hanna B. Hölling

Team:
Peter Schneemann (primary supervision PhD, UniBe),
Aga Wielocha (Postdoctoral Fellow),
N/A (Predoctoral Fellow),
Com&Com (Artistic Research)

Partner:
UniBe: University of Bern, Institute of Art History

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Contact:
www.hkb.bfh.ch/materialitaet
hanna.hoelling@hkb.bfh.ch

Bern Academy of the Arts
Research
Institute Materiality in Art and Culture
Fellerstrasse 11
3027 Bern
Department of the Bern University of Applied Sciences

