Mass Production: Artists’ Multiples & the Marketplace

Emily Davis Gallery
October 30 – December 1, 2006

The University of Akron
Mary Schiller Myers School of Art
Emily Davis Gallery
October 30 – December 1, 2006
TEXT

EVIL
Artists’ Multiples & the Marketplace

Foreword

Mass Production: Artists’ Multiples & the Marketplace

Why Multiply? Or How Artists Came to Love & Manipulate Post-Studio Art

Marcel Duchamp
Leonor Fini
Salvador Dali
Marcel Duchamp
Larry Miller
Robert Watts
Niki de Saint Phalle
Arman
Andy Warhol
Claes Oldenburg
Roy Lichtenstein
Joseph Beuys
Keith Haring
Yoko Ono
Vik Muniz
Larry Miller
Yooshimoto Nara
Takashi Murakami
Dalek (James Marshall)
Maurizio Cattelan,
Ali Subotnick,
& Massimiliano Gioni

Works in the Exhibition

Acknowledgments

inside front cover:
Maurizio Nannucci
Text/Exit, 1991
silkscreen on lighted metal box
10 x 8 x 4 inches
Insam Gleicher Gallery
Mass Production: Artists’ Multiples & the Marketplace

is dedicated to Mary Schiller Myers, a singular patron.

Jasper Johns
Target, 1971
lithography on board with watercolor cakes and brush
11 x 9 x 2 1/4 inches
Published with the catalogue for Sculpture and Creativity: Gemini G.E.L., Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1971
Art © Jasper Johns and Gemini G.E.L., Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY
Published by Gemini G.E.L.
The exhibition, *Mass Production: Artists’ Multiples and the Marketplace*, a powerful highlight in the Mary Schiller Myers School of Art exhibition series for 2006-2007, represents the best educational tradition of integrating faculty scholarship with intensely meaningful student participation. Professor of Art History, Kevin Concannon, has conceived a superb exhibition of considerable interest to the wider arts and academic communities, and has constructed a learning opportunity for University of Akron students, which has involved them in every phase of this exhibition and its catalog. Drawing from art collections coast to coast, Professor Concannon and his students, supported by Gallery Director Rod Bengston and his staff of graduate students, have assembled a rare selection of artists’ multiples. Their unique presentation in this exhibition has particular timeliness as well. When considered against the backdrop of post-modern skepticism about the possibility of artistic originality and the art world’s overt commercialization, the collected works of this show both belie the former and betray the latter. The many levels at which these artists engage such issues in these works is deeply intriguing. In the end creative optimism would seem to prevail against all odds.

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The project also takes advantage of the wonderful synergy among the various departments within the School. Professor Christopher Hoot worked with students in his summer graphic design class to produce this exceptional catalogue. The books you hold in your hands represent not only the work of art history students but the dedicated efforts of Professor Hoot and some of our very best graphic design students. Additionally, Professors Donna Webb and Sherry Samms, of the Ceramics and Metals programs, respectively, are currently offering a joint class in Production that will culminate in a concurrent exhibition in our Projects Gallery of multiples produced by our own students. It is inspiring to work in such a truly collegial environment!

It is rare for a university project to explore the sometimes esoteric and elite worlds of art criticism and collecting, and to so fully succeed in opening the door for student minds and hands to enter and take part. With this exhibition and catalogue, every stakeholder in our community has been enriched. This success is a credit to the disciplined scholarship of the professor and his students. It is also a tribute to the sponsorship and inspiration this university and its art school have received from art alumna Mary Schiller Myers. Because of her generous commitment to improved opportunity for all students who follow in her steps, this School has confidently moved toward ever more ambitious collaborative, cultural endeavors. Just as worlds of art have been brought to Akron by this School and its patron, so this School of Art at Akron shall press on in finding innovative ways to bring timeless art and timely scholarship to its hometown, to its region, and to the art scene, nationally and internationally.

Del Rey Loven
Director
Mary Schiller Myers School of Art
The University of Akron
Despite numerous attempts over the years, no single definition of the artist’s multiple has yet emerged as authoritative. For some, the conventional artist’s print is a subset of the multiple. For others, the multiple is by definition an editioned three-dimensional object. For this exhibition, as its title implies, the artist’s multiple is defined by having been mass-produced.

Naturally, the mass production of identical works of art has serious implications for the art market. For much of the history of the artist’s multiple, the market has been a prominent concern of those who produce multiples, be they artists, publishers, or dealers. Multiples have traditionally been touted as a ‘democratic’ medium, intended to make art available to the ‘masses.’ In retro-

Mass Production:
ARTISTS’ MULTIPLES
AND THE MARKETPLACE

written by Keven Concannon

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written by David Flitker

There is a pretty tried and true cliché about multiples—that artists, for the most part, make them in order to make money. Artists, like other business professionals—after all artists are professionals as loath as many are to admit it—pursue their practice with determination to make the best work possible, to disseminate their works widely and to receive appropriate remuneration for their labor in the form of gallery and/or museum exhibitions as well as an appreciable swelling of their bank accounts.

The chain of events flows as follows. Most artists crave recognition for themselves and their artwork, and this necessity, under most circumstances, requires enablers in the form of people with whom the artist must generally work in order to find recognition. A short list of the usual...
ing competitions at the 2006 Winter Games. Shaun White, known as ‘The Flying Tomato’ for his shock of red hair, won a Gold Medal in snowboarding.


According to his friend, H. P. Roché, his motivation was to facilitate “direct contact with the people.” Although such a statement might seem to imply a circumvention or subversion of the gallery system—an assault on the art market—Duchamp, as Francis wrote, “played” on a gramophone turntable. (See pages 26-27.)

Not surprisingly, Duchamp is among the earliest artists to have ventured into the territory of the multiple. In 1935, he rented a stall at a Paris inventors fair and attempted to sell his Rotoreliefs, a set of six double-sided cardboard discs printed on both sides with designs that produced the illusion of three-dimensionality when “played” on a gramophone turntable. (See pages 26-27.) According to his friend, H. P. Roché, his motivation was to facilitate “direct contact with the people.” Although such a statement might seem to imply a circumvention or subversion of the gallery system—an assault on the art market—Duchamp, as Francis

Naumann and David Joselit have both demonstrated, while frequently engaged in strategies of “institutional critique,” was quite literally invested in the art market for much of his life. Duchamp not only purchased work from artists as speculative investments, but in 1928 he considered accepting a job running the Brummer Gallery in New York City.3

Yet, as Naumann noted, when “in 1916 Knoedler Gallery offered him $10,000 a year to turn over his entire production to them, he refused.” And when his patron Katherine Dreier suggested that he account a much larger television audience) museum attendance would pale in comparison. Nobody in the United States, or perhaps anywhere else, cheers for Matthew Barney or Louise Bourgeois the same way people cheer for the New York Yankees, Michelle Kwan, or art), galleries (usually owned or controlled by the art kind of suspects includes (in rough chronological order) dealers (drug or art, galleries (usually owned or controlled by the art kind of dealers—but not always), writers, magazine editors, collectors, curators, museum trustees, museum directors, and lastly, the public generally does not care much about art or museums. The general public.

Ultimately, reaching the public as a platform for recognition is, by far, the most difficult hurdle, and the reason is clear: the general public may have a vague sense that museums are important, but they are important, not watch. 

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Secondly, fine art for the last century (and longer) has rarely escalated to a point where society either significantly notices it, or largely cares about it. Of course, society cares about film, television, and popular music, although for the most part, film, television, and popular music are packaged commodities distributed by multi-national conglomerates. Popular formats of entertainment are intended to be just that: popular entertainment.

“Popular” should not be read as “bad,” however. Making money certainly isn’t bad. Nor should entertainment consist purely of dogma that denies simple pleasures. “Low culture” clearly informs “high culture.” How could one watch MTV’s Jackass and not think about the parallels between this “low” art entertainment and Matthew Barney’s “high” art films as well as Chris Burden and Vito Acconci’s performance works? Which is more compelling or lasting?

“…in 1916 Knoedler Gallery offered him [Duchamp] $10,000 a year to turn over his entire production to them, he refused.”
It is also clear that artists making singular artworks in the form of paintings, drawings, sculptures or other unique media are not going to make inroads at repairing the schisms that now exist between artists and the public. Long gone is the notion that “the true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths” famously announced in neon almost forty years ago by Bruce Nauman (perhaps with more than a hint of irony). 

Historically there’s no clear date when art stopped mattering to the general public. Perhaps it was early in the twentieth century when a urinal became part of the art historical lexicon. Or it could well have been in the 1890s when the commoditization of photographic images reproduced by photo-lithographic techniques began to permeate society. Either way, the commodification and proliferation of reproduced images no doubt set us on the path we’re on today.

Clearly, Duchamp understood the necessity of the market, playing it even as he critiqued it. The somewhat conflicted position he occupied can in many respects be understood as characteristic of the history of multiples as a whole.

While the multiple has generally been understood as an implicit challenge to the art marketplace, from the very beginnings of the genre artists have also used the medium to exploit the marketplace as well.  "Guernica" and Salvador Dalí are among the earliest artists to lend their names and creative efforts to purely commercial enterprises (see pages 28-29), placing them at the forefront of a now well-estabished tradition of licensing deals in which artists lend their designs—and the cachet they have accrued in more exclusive precincts of the art market—to producers of luxury goods ranging from perfumes to handbags. Although Dali earned the contempt of his fellow Surrealists for such mercantile activities, by the end of the twentieth century, such deals were commonplace, admired as well. Leonor Fini and Salvador Dali are among the earliest artists to adopt the more critical stance (at least apparently) of their Dada fashion and commerce, for the most part their Neo-Dada followers almost inverse perspective.

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To a degree rarely recognized, many artists of the "Pop" generation look at themselves as small businessmen, engaged in the commerce of art. The careers and philosophies of Claes Oldenburg and Andy Warhol offer two prominent examples. Warhol famously stated: "Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art... making money is art and working is art and good business is the best." 9 Warhol certainly wasn’t without artistic sensibilities, but his enduring talent was clearly in product placement, and the product being placed was ultimately himself.

It was an important concept for me. I absolutely believed it. And it was an idea that was at least interesting to the people I worked with. We all felt that if young people could buy something really beautiful it could change the audience—an audience that had become elitist because the art was so expensive and the audience—an audience that had become elitist because the art was so expensive and the public. When is a Brillo box nothing more than a brillo box? What’s more consumable than Elvis, Marilyn, and Liz? Commodification was obtainable and rendered desirable. For a price, anybody could become a faux celebrity through having their portrait executed by Andy Warhol.

Oldenburg wasn’t so thorough strategized. Formally, his business seriously, Oldenburg kept copious typewritten notes, checklists, invoices, and expenses versus sales journals, documenting all income, expenses, and credit transactions to Constance Glenn as very close to the socialist idea that art should be accessible, and if art were available to everybody—and price was not an object—then artists would have a huge audience.
Even before Goodman opened her shop, Rosa Esman was working on what is now considered a major early example of the genre, her Seven Objects in a Box. The Seven Objects, a portfolio of multiples, featured three-dimensional works by Warhol, Jim Dine, Lichtenstein, Oldenburg (see pages 42-43), George Segal, Tom Wesselman, and Allan D’Arcangelo in a small wooden crate stenciled with the edition’s title. And, while Pop artists would soon seem to be everywhere with multiples galore, so was another group of artists emerging at the same moment: Fluxus. If Pop Art seemed rather pedestrian to connoisseurs of the more elevated Abstract Expressionism that had reigned until that moment, Fluxus seemed downright preposterous—as it was arguably intended to be. Fluxus artists poked fun at the lofty concerns of the more conventional art world, yet took their own stunningly quotidian concerns quite seriously. Yoko Ono’s Self-Portrait (1965) offered a simple polished piece of metal—a mirror that reflected back the image of the viewer rather than the artist. A humorous variation were frames that resembled products that could be found in real stores of the neighborhood; food and clothing playing the prominent roles. Like the Abstract Expressionists, particularly Jackson Pollock, Oldenburg painted with splashes, layering colors on top of each other to meld his iconography with the art history of his immediate predecessors’ style. Both artists needed enablers, however; Warhol and Oldenburg worked within the gallery structure of their time to ensure their works were revolved within the gallery system. Oldenburg’s Store was produced in collaboration with the Green Gallery, and Warhol quickly became a member of the Castelli Gallery. Oldenburg would later show with Sidney Janis Gallery, a Castelli rival, and ultimately join Castelli in the early 1970s.

Dealers, like sharks, can smell blood. Crafty or intelligent dealers can smell the melding of two distinct varietals—artists and collectors in a symbiotic relationship. Finding equilibrium within the art market is a delicate balance as there is a limited number of desirable, highly valued, artworks to feed a both a ravenous and saturated circle of art dealers and a seemingly finite number of serious collectors. The most intelligent dealers will forever recognize that collectors must sometimes be matriculated from an easy point of access, either financially or intellectually, to new collecting levels. What’s great about this country is that America started the tradition where the richest consumers buy essentially the same things as the poorest. You can be watching TV and see Coca-Cola, and you can know that the President drinks Coke, Liz Taylor drinks Coke, and just think, you can drink Coke, too. A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking. All the Cokes are the same and all the Cokes are good. Liz Taylor knows it, the President knows it, the bum knows it, and you know it.¹
on the convention of the artist’s self-portrait, Ono’s Fluxus edition suggests the role of the viewer in investing works of art with meaning. It also addresses the issue of the artist’s ego—a subject of particular concern, even contempt, among fluxus artists (or at least fluxus’s “charmer” George Maciunas). “One can say,” Maciunas wrote in 1964, “that fluxus opposes serious art or culture and its institutions. It is also opposed to artist professionalism and art as a commercial object or means to a personal income, it is opposed to any form of art that promotes the artist’s ego.” And in keeping with this idea, many fluxus works were collective works. The fluxus Yearbox and the fluxkit, both of 1964 (the latter inspired in form, at least, by Duchamp’s Valise), are among the group’s first major projects. (See pages 32-33.) Fluxus aimed not only to expose the pretensions of the art world, but also to undermine the art market itself through the strategies of collective authorship (a response to the problem of ego), direct sale and mail order (undermining the role of gallery and dealer), and the encouragement of artistic experiences in everyday situations. If pop made the commonplace precious, fluxus somehow made the precious seem commonplace. On a box of common kitchen matches, Ben Vautier’s Total Art Matchbox (1965) presents the instruction: “Use these matches to destroy all art….”

Again, Warhol’s observations are pertinent:

What’s great about this country is that America started the tradition where the richest consumers buy essentially the same things as the poorest. You can be watching TV and see Coca-Cola, and you can know that the President drinks Coke, Liz Taylor drinks Coke, and just think, you can drink Coke, too. A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking. All the Cokes are the same and all the Cokes are good. Liz Taylor knows it, the President knows it, the bum knows it, and you know it.4


Ben Vautier Total Art Match Box, 1965 matchbox with offset printed paper label 1 1/3 x 2 x 1/2 inches Courtesy The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Detroit, Michigan

Various Artists 7 Objects in a Box, 1966 Handmade crate with die-cut stencil, designed by Rosa Esman and Alan Hackett 18 x 14 x 14 inches edition of 75 copies with additional 25 lettered A-Y.

A clearer definition of Platonic forms is hard to imagine. We all recognize Coca-Cola as an unyielding icon. Warhol makes clear that one object may be the same as many—just as multiples are editions in which all things are created equal.

However, unlike the monolith that is the Coca-Cola corporation (with its subsidiary divisions and independent bottlers), artists need capital and collaborators to fabricate artworks in edition, distribution services to supply collectors far and wide, and somebody trustworthy to handle the paperwork. Few artists can (or want to) become subservient to paperwork and the outsourcing of fabrication details. For oldenburg a number of publishers succeeded at filling this role—Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles; Multiples, Inc. in New York City; Lippincott in North Haven, Connecticut; and Editions Alecto and Petersburg Press in London, England. Each firm brought a specific talent for fabrication and/or marketing to the table as well as some geographic diversity in its client base.
Roy Lichtenstein… did two intricate designs for a very beautiful little cloisonné enamel pin (*Modern Head Pendant*, 1968)…. Determined to sell them for twenty-five dollars each, so that everyone could afford one, we were somewhat dismayed to see the result of our virtually non-profit effort being bought and resold in Europe for ten times the price…. Many [other] artists… were also interested in exploring this direction and in trying to determine whether there indeed was a large popular audience for collecting art. We discovered that collecting was, however, still an elitist pursuit. I believe that this was the experience of many publishers, and the expansive notion of large editions was finally put to rest so that as a result, in the early seventies, the publishing world focused on smaller, and perhaps more personalized editions.¹⁸
projects for Fluxus with the joint participation of (Goodman’s) Multiples, Inc. Fluxus was to handle production and the out-
out-of-town-mail order business, and Multiples was to have ex
exotic rights in New York.” 14 Among the projects discussed and
developed was Oldenburg’s False Food Selection, which would not be issued by Fluxus until 1970. It appears, however, that the deal ran into some problems. In

Oldenburg’s official catalogue raisonné of multiples, the False Food Selection is conspicuously absent. It is instead relegated to an entry

In preparation for the book Claes Oldenburg: Multiples in Retrospect, Oldenburg stated that he felt that an artist needed to have a line

In a museum or gallery uptown, the same things would

Claes Oldenburg, Geometric Mouse (1966-67), painted aluminum with brass chains 42 x 42 inches (18 inch ear). Reproduced by special arrangement with Courtesy Brooke Alexander © Claes Oldenburg.

It seems highly likely, however, that the Fluxus edition, however

figure 6 Claes Oldenburg, conversation with the author, 1990. © Claes Oldenburg. Manager during the produc

In the Store’ (Oldenburg’s) objects can be seen in relation to their native surroundings. They can produce just

Claes Oldenburg, Ray Gun Wing (1966), enameled steel with bronze and Lucite, 32 x 35 x 13 inches. © Claes Oldenburg.

Claes Oldenburg, False Food Selection (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988): 41 1. This is a somewhat derogatory (and very misleading) profile that has been attached to artworks in edition—that they are “training wheels” for collectors. Like a drug pusher, this notion implies, art dealers start with the soft sell, establish addiction, and work through a steady progression of increases until the consumer is turned into a life-long collector or is saturated. The artist receives remunera-
tion, continues to make more multiples, which fuel a larger collecting base and finally provide a broad and diffuse lasting legacy.
public at a time when his gallery prices were escalating. T-shirts, inexpensive prints, badges, and other items were sold in the artist’s downtown boutique—his own attempt at “direct contact” with the people. Ironically, he was criticized for being too commercial. (See pages 48-49.)

Looking back today, Haring’s eighties experiment seems quite prescient. In the Internet age, the idea of a physical shop, however, has given way to the virtual marketplace. A range of companies, most notably Cerealart, offer editioned works by artists at surprisingly reasonable prices. And in some sense, the ‘democratic’ ambitions of the earliest multiples makers have been realized again. Very inexpensive works by well-known artists are widely available. Multiples, Incorporated, one of the key publishers and distributors of multiples in the 1960s, would ultimately transform itself into a very conventional—and very successful—gallery: Marian Goodman. In discussing the evolution of her business, Goodman identified a work by Roy Lichtenstein as the turning point.

Initially, very rarely do artists find great financial rewards from multiples. Initial income from sales is typically used to recoup production and fabrication expenses, then promotion costs are accounted for before an artist and publisher split the net income, usually 50/50, with the income often arriving in modest checks over a span of many years (if not indefinitely) until an edition sells out. However, the democratization of the artist’s work through creation of multiples that can be acquired by widely diverse economic classes does succeed in assisting in developing new consumers, which in time may climb the stairs of the collecting classes.

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Roy Lichtenstein… did ten intricate designs for a very beautiful little cloisonné enamel pin (Modern Head Pendant, 1968). [See pages 44-45.] Determined to sell them for twenty-five dollars each, so that everyone could afford one, we were somewhat surprised to see the result of our virtually non-profit effort being bought and resold in Europe for ten times the price. Many [other] artists… were also interested in exploring this direction and in trying to determine whether there indeed was a large popular audience for collecting art. We discovered that collecting was, however, still an elitist pursuit. I believe that this was the experience of many publishers, and the expansive notion of large editions was finally put to rest so that as a result, in the early seventies, the publishing world focused on smaller, and perhaps more personalized editions.

Collecting, though, has always been a popular pastime, enjoyed by people of extremely diverse financial means. The profiteering that apparently devastated the prospect for a multiples market in the late sixties, is today more likely to take place on eBay. And when it happens, more often than not, the market corrects itself in a short order.

Claes Oldenburg
False Food Selection, different versions and instruction drawings, including a 1966 prototype. Photo: Brad Iverson. Courtesy The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit, Michigan

Keith Haring
Skateboard Deck, 1987 silkscreen on board 10 x 28 inches © Estate of Keith Haring Used by Permission

And the distance between the department store and the gallery that seemed so vast when Dali pimped for Schiaparelli has all but disappeared in today’s globalized culture. In the Superflat world described by Takashi Murakami (see pages 58-61), the gallery, the convenience store, and the luxury goods boutique are simply different outlets for the artist’s work. Murakami’s designs for Louis Vuitton handbags appeared on canvases exhibited at his New York gallery. His sculptures that fetch record-breaking prices at auction appear in miniature versions for sale at convenience store checkouts in packages of gum. Asked about this unusual distribution network, Murakami replied:

Yes, it is something that I chose to pursue intentionally. While it might not have been possible in the past for a single artist to access multiple markets, today’s economy and society support this kind of diversity. I think there are obvious benefits to multiple distribution channels. From business benefits, to the potential of accessing a wider audience. I have set up my company around the investigation of various distribution channels, so that I would say, yes, they are very important for both my art and my other work.

Duchamp’s museum in a valise has traveled across the century and around the globe, only to land at hundreds of street corner shops to be consumed by a generation of collectors not old enough to have remembered that Keith Haring had been criticized for “selling out” by opening a SoHo boutique.

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A French/American artist whose work and ideas are pivotal in the development of modern and contemporary art, Marcel Duchamp has traditionally been associated with Dada, an international movement, which at its core was a way of life with the democratic ideals of bringing art to the masses. Duchamp and Dada would exert a tremendous influence on future art movements such as Fluxus and Pop. Duchamp challenged conventional ideas about what is considered art by removing common objects from their normal context and presenting them as art.

Duchamp's Rotoreliefs are a series of cardboard disks with images incorporating concentric circles printed on both sides in offset lithography. These disks are meant to be viewed while rotating on a turntable at 33 1/3 revolutions per minute. The effect is one that creates a three-dimensional space in the mind of the viewer. Duchamp indicated that viewing the rotating disks with only one eye could intensify this illusion. While Duchamp famously maintained that the viewer necessarily participated in the construction of an artwork's meaning, with the Rotoreliefs the images themselves are literally realized in the mind of the viewer as they turn. The brain interprets the revolving two-dimensional image reflected on the retina as having actual depth. One must suspend disbelief to believe the optical illusion. Duchamp was intrigued by “the concept that two different people watching the disk at the same time would not be perceiving it exactly the same way all the time.”

His rejection of traditional tools and materials (canvas, paintbrush, etc.) for a limitlessly reproducible art form (professionally printed cardboard disks) is key in the development of “multiples” as an art form. A large number of the original edition of 100 disks was destroyed in World War II. Several editions of his Rotoreliefs were issued: 1935 (Paris), 1959 (Paris), 1965 (New York), 1965 (Miami), 1967 (Cologne), and 2000 (Cologne).

Duchamp first exhibited his Rotoreliefs at the 1935 Concours Lepine in Paris—an inventor’s fair. His desire was to circumvent the galleries and instead take his art directly to the people. However, attendees at the fair largely ignored his Rotoreliefs. Duchamp’s artwork could not tempt visitors’ interest away from such practical inventions as vegetable choppers and garbage compactors. He recognized his choice of venue as “Error, 100%. At least it’s clear.”

Daniel Spoerri, who devised principles by which this new ‘multiple’ art form would be defined, indicated that the ‘multiplicite’ should be movable or in another way alterable allowing the viewers to participate in the production of art.” When Duchamp delivered 100 pieces from his 1953 New York edition of his Rotoreliefs for Spoerri’s MAT edition, Spoerri combined the discs with a turntable and motor concealed in black silk. However, multiples, as defined by Spoerri, “shouldn’t be manufactured with the normal artistic duplication techniques whereby the classical reproductive genres of print, photography, and sculpture were excluded.” Interestingly, Marcel Duchamp’s Rotoreliefs were already printed as offset lithographs for the MAT edition.

written by Jill Judge

The creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.

Marcel Duchamp


Marcel Duchamp

Rotoreliefs Marcel Duchamp (1935)

discs 5 3/4 inches (diameter)
Cologne: König Postkartenverlag (2000 edition)

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original edition of 100 disks was destroyed in World War II. Several editions of his Rotoreliefs were issued: 1935 (Paris), 1959 (Paris), 1965 (New York), 1965 (Miami), 1967 (Cologne), and 2000 (Cologne).

Duchamp first exhibited his Rotoreliefs at the 1935 Concours Lepine in Paris—an inventor’s fair. His desire was to circumvent the galleries and instead take his art directly to the people. However, attendees at the fair largely ignored his Rotoreliefs. Duchamp’s artwork could not tempt visitors’ interest away from such practical inventions as vegetable choppers and garbage compactors. He recognized his choice of venue as “Error, 100%. At least it’s clear.”

Daniel Spoerri, who devised principles by which this new ‘multiple’ art form would be defined, indicated that the ‘multiplicite’ should be movable or in another way alterable allowing the viewers to participate in the production of art.” When Duchamp delivered 100 pieces from his 1953 New York edition of his Rotoreliefs for Spoerri’s MAT edition, Spoerri combined the discs with a turntable and motor concealed in black silk. However, multiples, as defined by Spoerri, “shouldn’t be manufactured with the normal artistic duplication techniques whereby the classical reproductive genres of print, photography, and sculpture were excluded.” Interestingly, Marcel Duchamp’s Rotoreliefs were already printed as offset lithographs for the MAT edition.

written by Jill Judge

The creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.

Marcel Duchamp


The fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli was intimately acquainted with the leading artists of her day and incorporated much of their imagery into her own work. Artists such as Jean Cocteau, Leonor Fini and Salvador Dalí all created designs for her, creating something of a vogue for Surrealist inspired designs.

The fashion industry’s relationship with Surrealism, however, became more than an appropriation of avant-garde imagery: Surrealism was transformed into a popular marketing device.

In 1937 Schiaparelli commissioned the artist Leonor Fini to design a flacon for her signature perfume Shocking. Fini, whose ambiguous sexual images sat uneasily with Surrealist leader André Breton, never counted herself as an inner member of the Surrealists, though she often exhibited with them. The small torso she created for Schiaparelli recalls the fragmented body parts of the Surrealists, while the floral head recalls Dalí’s>Necrophiliac Springtime, a work that was part of the same exhibition. Fini’s torso was inspired by Mae West’s hourglass figure. A tape measure extends around the neck, forms an X over the chest and is held together by a little seal, while a glass dome covers its minute form. The clear vessel is filled with a dark perfume that seems to act as a liquid dress for the torso; however, as the liquid is consumed the dress seemingly lowers, creating an erotic and playful image with sexual implications.

In 1946 Schiaparelli commissioned Salvador Dalí to design a perfume flacon, as well. The result was the baroque object Le Roy de Soleil. Made of Baccarat crystal, it was produced in a limited edition of two thousand bottles and reflects much of the postwar euphoria in its playfulness and subject matter. The flacon base resembles rocks and waves with a large sun shaped stopper. The metal clamshell, in which the flacon rests, was probably intended to evoke images of rebirth and renewal, recalling Botticelli’s Birth of Venus. The sun’s face, created by the illusion of birds in flight, is reminiscent of the sun king’s famous emblem, the inspiration for the piece. Louis XIV would not only conjure up images of France’s gilded age, but would have evoked happier and more financially prosperous days, as well as the country’s newly acquired independence.

Dalí may have wished to shock, but he was dedicated to traditional ideas often in opposition to the Surrealists. Dubbed Avida Dollars (an anagram of his name) by Breton, Dalí was eventually expelled from the Surrealists. But Dalí’s fascination with popular culture set the stage for later artists such as Andy Warhol and Takashi Murakami. And like many pop artists, Dalí did not limit the scope of his marketing to fashion; his interest in design extended to everything from jewelry to airline ads, all of which set the stage for future interest in the collapse of high and low culture.

6. Blum, 139.
The ultimate example of the artists’ multiple might well be Marcel Duchamp’s Boîte-en-Valise. Duchamp famously transformed everyday objects, a urinal, bottle dryer, and many other quotidian objects by simply placing them in galleries thereby challenging the very definition of art. These objects, known as readymades, became the signature works of his career. Versions of these items found their way into various edition of the Boîte-en-Valise. In an attempt to save his work from destruction during World War II, as well as supplying friends and followers with collectable objects, Duchamp created his box in a valise that has inspired countless artists to this day. Before leaving Europe and the war behind him, Duchamp commissioned various European artists to reproduce in miniature sixty-nine of his best known works and shipped the miniatures to America so they would be waiting for him to assemble once he arrived. The re-fabrications of his works took five years to complete while the various editions of the Boîte-en-Valise themselves would take him over three decades.

The seven editions of the Boîte-en-Valise contain reproductions that span his works from 1910 to 1954. Duchamp included representative works in every medium, from his readymades to his paintings, sculptures, and drawings. These pieces include some of his best known works of art such as the Fountain, L.H.O.O.Q. and Nude Descending Staircase No. 2, the Rotoreliefs, Bottle Rack, 50 cc Paris Air, Why Not Sneeze, Chocolate Grinder, and The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors Even, some of which were multiples to begin with. To produce the multiples, Duchamp hired hardware supply companies, commercial painters, and other artisans to fabricate the constituent elements. Once the replicas were made, Man Ray, Joseph Cornell, and other friends helped with the fabrication of the completed boxes.

Each of the seven editions was given a corresponding letter, the 1968 edition in Mass Production is edition G. This edition is distinguished by the change of color from red to green leather and lining and contains its items. The first Boîte-en-Valise went to Duchamp’s brother, and the first edition was intended for friends and close contacts in the art world. Each time he put one of the boxes together, he would try to include a different unique object from his collection, typically by request from the person buying it. Later editions were to be sold through Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century Gallery for $200 each, and again, he tried to include a different unique object within each example as well as changing the color of the box. Much like his Rotoreliefs, there have been numerous editions issued since the Boîte’s debut in 1942. First exhibited at Art of This Century, the work was displayed in a unique manner. The viewer would look through a peephole in the wall to see the Boîte-en-Valise. Through the peephole the items of the Boîte-en-Valise were setup in a way the viewer would have to turn a wheel to have the items revolve so each item could be seen individually. The Boîte-en-Valise at Art of This Century was the first time Duchamp used a peephole presentation. During the time of making the Boîte-en-Valise, Duchamp swore off making art for the rest of his life. He spent his days playing chess. It wasn’t until after his death in 1968 that it became apparent he had been working all those years on the Étant Donnés. In its unusual form of presentation, this piece relates to the Art of This Century display of the Boîte-en-Valise in that viewers must stand in front of a large door to look through holes in the door to see the work on the other side. Duchamp’s Boîte-en-Valise became a model for future artists’ work. The Flux Boxes, Seven Objects in a Box, and Murakami’s Superflat Museum are a few of many later multiples that have been inspired by Boîte-en-Valise.

LA BOÎTE-EN-VALISE
MARCEL DUCHAMP (1942)
written by Frances Nicholson & Alex Draven


© 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP , Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp
Maciunas encouraged Fluxus editions tending toward “functionalism” and “commodity” value, which also translate as objects that are conceptually unimportant. They tend to be concerned less with image than with information directed to the form of the thing itself (functionalism), or constituting merely of the brute physical facts of the work (commodity). Many of the works then depart from that strict adherence to information to play with the methodological figure of how one presents information, sets, classifications, matrices, or taxonomies. Content can then be transformed into the realms of the natural subject, the mad, the past or game.

Some Fluxus editions incorporate conceptualism and suggest an indelible approach to things, offering the opportunity to compose a set of objects that have a taxonomical schema; numerous things that have sameness-yet-difference uniting them. Robert Watts’s Fluxus Florida is a collection of small stones from around the world, with cards in each compartment identifying their geographical origin, a mimic of familiar kits of stones labeled with their geographical names. These boxes can be seen as the completed result of an event carried out. One sees the word “trace,” as in geological names. These boxes can be seen as the completed result of an event driven in their invitation to interactivity. There are boxes with a genuine hands-on sense—to be handled as much as seen—similar to a game or a puzzle.

Other Fluxus boxes offer the opportunity to actually carry out printed event scores, as in Brecht’s Theater and the genuine anthropology. Fluxus (the first Fluxus multiple to be designed by Maciunas, but not completed for release until 1966) is fluxus, as this used as that part 2 is a comparison between things that share containing numerous individual items and many Fluxus graphics. The actual realizations of the Fluxus event scores are literally infinite in possibility and have shown a relentless appeal to young performing artists today.

Epilogue:

LM: Do you have any idea of what you totally spent on Fluxus?

GM: Probably about fifty thousand.

LM: Has it paid off?

GM: No, it will never pay off.

LM: May I ask a stupid question? Why didn’t it pay off? Because isn’t part of the idea that it lose cost and multiple distribution?

GM: It was never buying in the days. We opened up a store on Canal Street… Just 1964. We didn’t even sell a fifty-cent item, a postage stamp, one sale in that whole six-year… We didn’t even sell a fifty-cent item, a postage stamp. I didn’t make one sale in that whole six-year.

LM: Why didn’t it pay off? Because, isn’t part of the idea that it lose cost and multiple distribution?

GM: No, it will never pay off. Because isn’t part of the idea that it lose cost and multiple distribution?

LM: Has it paid off?

GM: No, it will never pay off…

—Transcribed from Interview with George Maciunas by Larry Miller, 1978

Major League baseballs are manufactured to be consistently identical multiples and cost about $1.50. They are used in a game for about 6 pitches until 1964. Maciunas, like this used as that part 2 is a comparison between things that share containing numerous individual items and many Fluxus graphics. The actual realizations of the Fluxus event scores are literally infinite in possibility, and have shown a relentless appeal to young performing artists today.
Fluxpost 17/17 is an 8 1/2 by 11 inch sheet of 100 stamps designed and fabricated by artist Robert Watts in 1964. Each stamp features a found image from pop culture. These images include partial and full faces of pop icons of the day, parts of hands, and other partial abstractions of images. The images feature a combination of photography, drawing and engraving. All of the images are similar in color, produced in a half-tone reproduction, with a glossy finish. The stamps have been printed in black and white as well as in blue and white with a printing plate number appearing at the bottom right corner. The original stamps were a complete sheet and not perforated like U.S. postage stamps but there is glue on the back.

2. Held.

Robert Watts is not the first artist to use postage stamps as a medium. In 1919, for example, Dada artist Raoul Hausmann used a self portrait as a postage stamp and later, in 1957, Yves Klein arranged with the postmaster to have a special blue stamp he created used to mail the invitations for his upcoming show. Watts began designing postage stamps in 1961. Fluxpost 17/17 is the fourth in his postage stamp collection. Before Fluxpost 17/17 Watts technique for printing had been rough, and the resolution was poor. His experience working with this medium helped make Fluxpost 17/17 one of his most enduring works. The work was used for many years in the Fluxkits produced by George Maciunas.

The Mail Art genre itself was arguably born out of necessity. Michael Crane, author of Correspondence Art: Source Book for the Network of International Postal Art Activity writes:

“The parallel between centers of Fluxus and mail art activity was not coincidence but a result of Fluxus travels, performances, encounters, and communication. The mails became an important means to meet organizational needs. Most of the Fluxus artists involved or carried on an activity paralleling Mail Art among themselves, friends and collaborators. The mails allowed these artists to exchange scores, notes, instructions, as well as graphic works and `unobjects’ for exhibitions, reproductions (e.g. multiples) or publications.”

Fluxpost 17/17 transforms stamps themselves from mere tools of the mail artist into works themselves, a fitting conflation of art and design. Robert Watts exhibited with both Fluxus and Pop artists; these two genres influenced him not only in his Mail Art but in the rest of his art career.
Niki de Saint Phalle’s shoot paintings are unique. Unlike other interactive art, her paintings include something considered violent. When people think of guns, they think of men going hunting or even to war. It is an unusual sight to see a woman shooting at all. Yet the image of artist Niki de Saint Phalle wielding a .22 rifle aimed at a canvas bleeding paint remains her signature image. After a career spent mainly on other bodies of work, most people remember these paintings.

Her paintings started out with a flat wooden board. The containers, made of cans or bags, of different color paint were then laid on. They were then held in place with a few layers of plaster or wire. During the exhibition she would stand them up and shoot at them with a .22 rifle. There is a very famous picture of Robert Rauschenberg shooting at one of her paintings. The paint would then burst out of the newly made hole and drip down over the plaster. In later exhibitions people in the audience were also invited to come and shoot the paintings. Later she would also add things like: high heel shoes, curlers, kitchen utensils, plastic toys, tin pistols, air fighters, weapons and arms, countless dolls, soldiers, clowns, masks of the world leaders in those days, such as Kennedy and Khrushchev, statues of angels and of the Virgin Mary, devils, monsters, spiders, snakes, artificial flowers, as well as wool threads and cloths.

Adding things like this showed her involvement with assemblage. She started these paintings because it was a way to vent her anger. It was “anger that made her feel like she was suffocating.” She shot for the “moment of magic” and because it was a way to make her anger into something productive. The paintings started out as a murder without a victim, since it not only looked to her like the painting was dying. She suddenly stopped making her shooting paintings because she had “become addicted to shooting, like one becomes addicted to a drug” and moved into her Nana creations. In 1964 she was invited by Daniel Spoerri to make her art into a multiple. This was possible to do because it followed the three rules of a multiples that he had laid down in 1956. The piece is not made in conventional ways, it can communicate an idea without the artist there, and it also involves the viewer in some way. The way they pulled this off was to have Spoerri’s team make each one, but to make the person who bought the art shoot the painting and complete it.
French born artist Arman was a member of an art group established in the 1960s called the Nouveaux Réalistes or New Realists. It was their goal to reconsider the significance of real objects as produced, collected, and discarded by society. Arman worked in several media, including printmaking, performance art, sculpture, and assemblage. Poubelle is a French word for trash can and is therefore appropriately given to this work as it is literally trash encased and displayed within a vitrine.

The concept of accumulating and showcasing trash stems from Arman’s exposure to a post-war industrial era in which objects were mass-produced, consumed, and ultimately forsaken. Much of his previous work involved the destruction of objects ranging from cars to musical instruments that he could then reassemble as alternate compositions. The process, or transformation, that the object has undergone then became an essential part of the finished work. The same can be said of the trash within his Poubelles. It too has undergone change, at the hands of society as a whole and of those individuals specifically responsible for its fate up until the point that the artist collected it. He then recycles the waste by turning it into art.

The Poubelle presently on display contains random trash gathered on the streets of Paris, bringing attention to cultural waste. Arman also created Poubelles that profiled persons familiar to him. In these instances he assembled personal effects that reflected the life of the individual. Some, for example, featured the leftover materials of well-known artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. Scraps of paper or canvas with Lichtenstein’s signature dots or strips on them made the contents of these vitrines easily recognizable. Arman’s statement was, to some degree, a response to American Pop Art.

Also reflected in Arman’s work, though not as plainly, are the influences of Dadaism and Surrealism, art movements dating to the early twentieth century. Dadaism can be defined as rediscovering the irrational in the visual arts and has been linked to Sigmund Freud’s questioning of rationalist views of the world. The unconventional media and processes used by Arman seem to relate well to such theories. In 1960 he filled an entire gallery space, the Galerie Iris Clert, with trash. It was his response to his friend Yves Klein’s 1958 exhibition entitled L’Espace or The Void which simply consisted of a gallery space exhibited completely empty. Arman entitled his piece Le Plein or Full-Up.
Andy Warhol
Campbell's Soup Can Shopping Bag (1964)

written by Stacy L. McClain

Perhaps no one is better known for a singular signature image more than Andy Warhol. Warhol's trademark images of Campbell's soup cans have arguably made him the most popular of the Pop artists. The famous series of Campbell's Soup Cans Warhol exhibited in 1962 at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles were painted by hand and featured all 32 varieties of Campbell's soup then offered. While these original works were each unique, the leap from original to multiple that would soon take place seems somehow inevitable.

Andy Warhol
Campbell's Soup Can Shopping Bag (1964)
screenprint on shopping bag
20 x 18 inches
© 2006 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. ™ Licensed by Campbell's Soup Co. All rights reserved

Andy Warhol made multiples of this literally trademark image on shopping bags for the American Supermarket exhibition in 1964. The shopping bag was a plain white paper bag with handles that had a bull's eye die-cut image of a tomato soup can centered on the front. The bags sold for $1.25 each, and were the best seller of the show. The same week the show opened a smaller version, held in New York's trendy East Village, featured about 30 copyright-cleared prints of Campbell's soup in different color combinations. There were no demand for the Campbell's soup products, most only categorized as a form of artistic expression. This would change in the 1980s.

In a truly impressive posthumous business deal, the Warhol Estate licensed back to Campbell's his early interpretations of the Campbell's labels. In 2004, Pittsburgh area Giant Eagle Supermarkets issued limited editions four packs of special "Warhol Edition" Campbell's soup. The images on the labels of tomato soup were in vibrant Warhol designs of red, pink, and orange, aqua and indigo or gold and yellow. Each four pack contained two colored soup cans based on earlier Warhol silk-screens. Even in death, Warhol has again transformed ordinary soup cans into collectible art.

The connection between consumerism and pop art is made clear with this exhibition. The shopping bag is a symbol of consumerism, and art was becoming big business in this era of postwar prosperity. A keen observer of contemporary society, Warhol famously stated, "Business is the best art."
Claes Oldenburg

**N.Y.C. Pretzel, Baked Potato, & Wedding Souvenir**

**1966**

written by Ashley Presutto

Claes Oldenburg’s Baked Potato (1966), from the portfolio Seven Objects in a Box, is considered to be one of the first multiples made in a “regulated” commercial edition. For Baked Potato, Oldenburg gathered an assembly line of friends and associates and first made a plaster master shaped around a sewn potato, which was then used to form the mold for the resin casting. John Wesley laid on the color, following explicit instructions. To finish, Oldenburg himself dipped on the chives with an ordinary toothbrush loaded with green paint. The potato sits atop a white plate purchased from a restaurant supply store on Manhattan’s Bowery.

Claes Oldenburg

A single slice of white wedding cake served as the Wedding Souvenir for the April 23, 1966 wedding of James Elliot and Judith Algar. Oldenburg created the original in New York and sent it to be mass-produced; by the morning of the wedding approximately 250 slices were made. The pieces were not numbered and no one can remember the exact number of pieces that was made. Most of the pieces were stamped “Claes Oldenburg Wedding Souvenir Los Angeles 1966,” but not all. According to the groom, seventy-two pieces were tinted silver with spray enamel, eighteen of which formed a cake that was given to the Elliotts. Approximately forty-five of the other silver slices were given to members of the wedding party. The remaining unpainted white slices were left for guests to take home.

In many ways, Oldenburg’s multiples are insignias of a particular generation, locale, or culture. His inspiration often comes from objects surrounding him at a given moment in time—N.Y.C. Pretzel (1994) serves as an omnipresent icon of the city in which Oldenburg lives. His studio manager, David Platzker, purchased a pretzel from the street below the studio that was used as the pattern. More than 1000 pretzels made of three-ply cardboard which was laser-cut and silk-screened were produced. One could argue that there are actually six variations of this multiple due to the six different salt patterns that were used to silk-screen. The burnt odor resulting from the laser-cutting process reminded Oldenburg of bakery production and the smell of toasted chestnuts sold on the street next to the pretzels.

Oldenburg described his work as embodying a “love for the rejected, inexplicable and simple.” By transforming ordinary, everyday objects into works of art, Oldenburg breathes new life into the ordinary and playfully tests our perception of reality. Oldenburg also began to articulate the ideas that would influence the earliest multiples; Oldenburg can be recognized as a forerunner in the early development of the multiple form.

Oldenburg used the medium of the multiple as a logical extension of his sculpture; the multiple was Oldenburg’s solution to printmaking. Oldenburg’s multiples are sculptures produced in editions of 26 or more and are to be viewed as a vital part of his sculptural preoccupations. For Oldenburg, the multiples offered a foundation for the experimentation and development of ideas for his work.

Oldenburg summarized his idea about the art form:

> “Anyone who owns a multiple is aware of there being others. It’s a shared thing… I think of them as going out into the world and having different experiences all over the world. Some are lying in drawers and some are being carried in planes, and so on. They’re always changing hands. They have adventures.”

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Claes Oldenburg

**Baked Potato,** 1966
cast resin, painted with acrylic, Shanango china dish
7 x 10 ½ x 4 ½ inches

© Claes Oldenburg

Claes Oldenburg

**Wedding Souvenir,** 1966
cast plasters, “silver edition” is spray painted
5 ¾ x 6 ½ x 2 ½ inches

© Claes Oldenburg
Jewelry multiples have been very popular throughout the contemporary art world due to their relative ease of production, versatility, and the popularity of “wearable art” with consumers. One of the best-known jewelry multiples is the brooch done by Roy Lichtenstein.

Lichtenstein was a prominent pop artist known primarily for images reminiscent of comic books that were very graphic with bright, mainly primary, colors and representations of Benday dots. It is in this style that he created his brooch multiple as well. The brooch was issued in 1968 and was based on one of his lithographs. It features four colors: mustard yellow, red, burgundy and navy blue. The image consists of a woman’s face with various linear compositional elements surrounding it. The woman has blonde hair and her face is polka-dotted; there is a serene expression on her face and the right side of her hair is reminiscent of a lightning bolt. The brooch is made of silver and colored and painted with a type of enamel.

The brooch was created in collaboration with Multiples, Incorporated and Castelli Graphics. The Castelli Gallery in New York was a place Lichtenstein exhibited some of his other works and became a partner for him when he decided to do a jewelry multiple.

Lichtenstein is not the only artist to use jewelry as a medium for making multiples. Alexander Calder produced kinetic earrings which resembled the mobiles for which he is famous; Takashi Murakami produces a wide variety of whimsical jewelry which appeals to both children and adults alike; and Keith Haring sold many types of jewelry multiples in his Pop Shop. Salvador Dali and other artists also produced jewelry multiples as well.
Joseph Beuys’ interest in felt as an art material is generally traced to a key myth about the artist, one that he propagated himself, and one that is now widely believed to be without basis in truth. It is the story of his wartime experience as a German pilot in World War II, during which his plane crashed in the Crimea in 1943. According to the story, after days buried in the snow, he was rescued by nomadic Tartars who rubbed him with fat and wrapped him in felt to heal his body, thus saving his life. But Beuys would also claim that the story was overly emphasized and that he had other reasons for choosing felt as a material. According to author Julie Luckenbach:

Felt exemplifies materiality, density, entanglement while it connotes the properties of insulation and protection. But the material and physical qualities of felt contain broader social implications: the fibers of felt, consisting of a pressed mass of animal hair or wool, become so intertwined through the transformative process of construction as to be inseparable. This material construction is analogous to “the social dimension of humanity, man is his milieu. He cannot out of his communal bonds; he cannot defend himself against the dangers of life and develop his potential alone.”

Beuys’ use of felt, then, can be understood in terms of both survival and warmth in a very literal sense—and as a metaphor for human interdependence. Beuys has defined his artistic practice as “Social Sculpture—how we mold and shape the world in which we live: sculpture as an evolutionary process, everyone an artist.”

While, as an article of clothing, the felt suit might suggest the warmth provided Beuys by the mythic Tartars, the felt Postcard more obviously brings to mind the notion of human interdependence. As a vehicle for sending communications throughout the world (through the postal system), it surely suggests human interconnectedness.

Beuys’ desire to reach broad and democratic audiences is suggested as well by the postcard format—and in his propensity for making multiples as well. In a 1979 interview, he indicated his conflicted attitude toward the institutions of art—particularly the art market. This relates to the production of art articles—giving in the art market—so I cannot completely stop this production of sculptures, art objects, which result in this capitalist system for money. One must see that I try to overcome the political system and try to develop a kind of enterprise, with other descriptions than the capitalist enterprise and understood as a so-called free market, in business and all the other things. [For] surely every work has to be organized in a kind of enterprise or museum.

Here, Beuys adopts an unusual position; he seems to see the art market itself as first and foremost a distribution system—a system of human interconnectedness. Asked about the intellectual or political value of his multiples by Art Papier, he stated: “It is a kind of vehicle, you know. It is a kind of making, spreading out ideas, that is what I think. It spreads out the idea.”

written by Julie Crilow

1. For a standard account of this story, see: Caroline Tisdall, Joseph Beuys (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1979): 16-17.
5. Papier, 44.
In April 1986, when graffiti artist Keith Haring opened his Pop Shop on Lafayette Street in downtown Manhattan, the art world was in transition. Haring recognized this shift, commenting on it explicitly only a few years later:

“...the emergence of a new group of artists, who are suddenly receiving the attention that had been bestowed upon me and Jean-Michel [Basquiat] and Julian Schnabel. I’m talking about these Neo-Geo artists—people like Jeff Koons, Ashley Bickerton, Peter Halley, and Meyer Vaisman, who hold long intellectual discourses about language and get really bogged down in themselves."

His solution was to open the Pop Shop, a downtown boutique stocked with items bearing the artist's signature designs. The shop, in the netherworld between SoHo and the Lower East Side, sold T-shirts, inflatable baby-shaped pillows, AM-FM radios, refrigerator magnets, Swatch watches, posters, and buttons—all with Haring’s distinctive and unmistakable graphics. Toward the end of his tragically short life, he explained the philosophy of the Pop Shop:

“I wanted to continue the same sort of communication as with the subway drawings. I wanted to attract the same wide range of people, and I wanted it to be a place where, yes, not only collectors could come, but also kids from the Bronx…. The main point was that we didn’t want to produce things that would cheapen the art. In other words, this was still an art statement. I mean, we could have put my designs on anything. In fact, Newsweek came out with a story that we were selling sheets and pillowcases, which we never did! And we didn’t sell coffee mugs or ballpoint pens or shower curtains. We sold the inflatable baby and the toy radio and, mostly, a wide variety of T-shirts, because they’re like a wearable print–they’re art objects.

By 1988, Haring had opened a Pop Shop in Tokyo. And while the Tokyo Pop Shop would last only a year, the original shop on New York’s Lafayette Street would survive until September 2005.

“...the elitist art world wants and needs to separate itself from the masses and the rest of the culture—because it’s so anal and self-referential. What’s interesting is that this movement purports to be conscious and reflective of the whole consumer aspect of the art world, which, of course, I had been doing all along, with ideas like the Pop Shop. But these people have the blessings of the museums and the critics because they played the game and went through conventional art channels as opposed to starting on the streets."

Haring, of course, had started on the streets—and famously, in the subways. His chalk drawings of dogs, babies, and other iconic figures appeared regularly on empty subway station advertising spaces in the early 1980s. By 1986, he had stopped because his gallery prices were putting the subway drawings in jeopardy; people were stealing them in the hopes of cashing in on Haring’s escalating market.

They became exactly what the elitist art world wants and needs to separate itself from the masses and the rest of the culture—because it’s so anal and self-referential. What’s interesting is that this movement purports to be conscious and reflective of the whole consumer aspect of the art world, which, of course, I had been doing all along, with ideas like the Pop Shop. But these people have the blessings of the museums and the critics because they played the game and went through conventional art channels as opposed to starting on the streets.

Of course, the Pop Shop was an easy target, and it was attacked from all sides. People could now say, “What do you mean Haring isn’t commercial? He’s opened a store!” But I didn’t care, because it’s still going strong—and it’s an art experiment that works.


written by Kevin Concannon
In 1996 Yoko Ono produced an exhibition catalogue in the form of a multiple: *Fly*. It is, at once, a catalogue for her 1996 exhibition of the same name at the Anderson Gallery in Richmond, Virginia, and a work of art unto itself. *Fly* contains a printed catalogue with exhibition essay, nine cards depicting various pieces within the exhibit, tissue paper wrapped acorns with text for *Wish Piece* rubber stamped on it, and two stones wrapped in the same paper with a text, *Cleaning Piece*, stamped on it. A copy of the original instruction piece, *Fly*, appears within the boxed multiple, as well as a narrow card with five stills from her film, *Fly*. The instruction, on which all these other works are based, states:

**FLY PIECE**
Fly.
1963 summer

The word “Fly” is direct and prompts, not only the artist’s various realizations of the work, but the viewer’s execution(s) of the piece as well. It can be realized in multiple ways, understood as a noun, adjective or verb, but in the context of an instruction piece, seems to imply action. The verb “fly” dangles between the notion of ultimate, unrestricted freedom and the risk of death. It implies that we should detach ourselves from what we know in reality and overcome fears of height, gravity, or death.

Ono’s instructional works and event scores are rooted in poetic language and the subsequent image the audience develops. They employ a sense of playfulness as well as self-reflection, slightly reminiscent of George Brecht’s Fluxus instruction pieces. *Grapefruit* (1964), a collection of instruction pieces in book form, Ono has compared herself to a grapefruit that, in its taste, has a “hybrid” nature being neither orange nor lemon flavor. She symbolizes her experiences growing up with the metaphor of a grapefruit, as she was considered an outsider in both Eastern and Western cultures.  

Fly has seen many reincarnations, originally a printed instruction piece in 1963, as an element of *Grapefruit*, realized as performance, film, billboards, a conceptual exhibition, Museum of Modern (Fly), and in 1996 as the boxed multiple that appears in this exhibition, which stems from a legacy of Fluxus boxed multiples, such as the *Fluxus Box* (see pp. 32-33).

Within the context of this exhibition, we see how Ono’s work transcends the boundaries of artistic genre and, whether or not it has been reproduced in print, how her instructional works and event scores were intended to be reproduced by anyone at any time—through either mental or physical actions that complete the work. In the work’s ability to have multiple manifestations and be distributed inexpensively, it demonstrates a democratic aspect of art as multiple. In any form, *Fly* is a figurative and literal work on how to slip between the gap of art and reality.
Vik Muniz, a Brazilian-born artist now residing in New York City, is known for using unconventional media—and playing with his food. His 1999 Peter Norton Family Christmas Project (Medusa Marinara) consists of a plate displaying a photographic image of his reconstruction of Caravaggio’s Medusa (1594) in spaghetti and marinara sauce. Thin tendrils of pasta create her hair while the marinara sauce forms the features of her face.

Invited by the Nortons, prominent collectors of contemporary art, to produce their 1999 Christmas Project, he created the Medusa plate as well as an ashtray based on Caspar David Friedrich’s The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog (1818). The Norton Christmas list was begun in 1988 by Peter Norton, and his then-wife Eileen Harris Norton. Each year an artist is selected who creates a large edition for the Norton’s list. Each person on the list, which can grow to five thousand people per year, and includes artists, curators, and other key figures in the contemporary art world, receives the much-anticipated Norton gift each holiday season.

The 12 1/2-inch Limoges plate presents an image of the famous gorgon, Medusa, a Greek and Roman mythological character whose stare could turn a man into stone, and whose hair was composed of coiling snakes. As is Muniz’s custom, the original image was created, photographed, and then destroyed. The only evidence left is the photograph—in this case reproduced on dinner plates. The use of porcelain stoneware to create a creature that could turn people to stone is humorous. The use of spaghetti as a medium for a tale told within Italy is equally amusing. And, of course, the shape of the plate recalls Medusa’s ubiquitous presence on warriors’ shields during ancient times—intended to petrify the enemy. The plate is funny, intriguing, and, as stated on the back of the plate, “Dish Washer Safe.”

When the U.S. Supreme Court allowed General Electric Corporation to patent genetically-engineered bacteria in 1980, I grew convinced that patents of life forms were likely to advance to more complex organisms, and eventually to the patenting of human genomes. I began my Genetic Code Copyright project in 1985-86, when I tried to convince two different attorneys to draft a document claiming “copyright” of my personal genome. They both declined, not finding a legal basis for my concept.

By 1989, I decided to take matters into my own hands and create the proclamation myself. I made a handwritten document claiming copyright and ownership of my personal DNA, which was notarized in the Empire State Building. I also published my illustrated text *RE NOAH*, a satirical argument on why genetic samples from Original Humans, Animals, and Plants should be protected from alteration and concealed for safe-keeping. In the following years I made performances around the world on the subjects of genetic engineering, natural law, identity, and privacy, commenting on the degradation of life into a commodity. In 1992, I began publishing the Genetic Code Copyright certificates: ornate, fill-in forms for other Original Humans to declare ownership of their genomes. In 1994 I made the certificate available on the first Fluxus website which I co-curated with Nam June Paik.

In 2000, Creative Time in New York commissioned several artists to create designs on paper coffee cups for its DNAid™ Project. The cups were distributed in selected New York delicatessens. My coffee cup design demonstrated that by normal use, people were leaving a sample of their DNA on the cup, which then could be harvested. It guided them to the Creative Time website for more information, along with the certificate, in English, free to download. To date, the certificate has been translated into many languages. The original certificates have been distributed to over 2000 individuals who have claimed their rights. Uncounted thousands have also been downloaded from the internet since 1994. Ongoing at present, it is still available at http://www.creativetime.org/programs/archive/2000/DNAidBillboard/copyright.html or by visiting <onlyoneLarryMiller.com>. Larry Miller © 2006
Nara’s works tend to be described by critics as “nostalgia for childhood.”2 His works seem too calculated and self-mocking to simply be described as that, however. He grew up as a “latchkey kid” in postwar Japan. It has been said that Nara’s work can be viewed as an expression of an infantilizing culture that suppresses adult emotion among young and old alike.3 Ramona expresses the malevolence and self absorption of youth, while at the same time, his work evokes a sense of innocence that can be somewhat disconcerting. While Nara’s style seems to be clearly tied to manga and anime, Nara insists otherwise. “My art represents my childhood experiences. It is not influenced by Japanese pop culture. I played with sheep, cats and dogs when I came home from school.”4 Although Nara does not like to be associated with Japanese pop-culture, he does claim influence by British and American punk counter-culture. In fact, his catalog for his traveling exhibition, Nothing Ever Happens (2003), features essays by western pop culture icons such as Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day, author Dave Eggers, and Debbie Harry of Blondie. Much of his fan base emerged from this same counter-culture.

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When Murakami was commissioned by Mark Jacobs to develop a variation of the Louis Vuitton pattern with the company in 2003, he applied the same concepts of the Superflat to the design, such as the palette of colors. The new look bombards the viewer with a splash of color and pattern on a white and sometimes black leather background. The variation of this bag from the past brown and tan collection is simply the change of color; the design otherwise remained the same.

Murakami has a widely varied art market, served by products ranging from convenience store collectibles of his Superflat Museum sets (complete with bubblegum) for $3 to major sculptures and paintings selling for six figures. The Vuitton work is just another example of his exceptionally broad market. The handbag collection is so successful that, as of 2005, it had reported sales of around $300 million. The market for this item is global, but it is desired for different reasons in western culture than in eastern culture. In Japan, this item is highly desirable not only because it is a Louis Vuitton bag, but because Murakami designed the graphics. In western culture, most women who purchase this handbag do not have any idea who Murakami is. This market is also very different in Japan as it is in western cultures due to the value placed on “fine art.” In the Japanese language, there was not even a word for “fine art” until after 1868. Japan is used to having galleries amongst shopping places, and when Murakami’s dealer Tomio Koyama was asked why he hadn’t shown the monogram work in his gallery setting, he explained, “In Japan, a gallery has no meaning, and a Louis Vuitton shop is a more powerful place to see something.”

Murakami studied traditional Japanese painting during his schooling. He is best known for his distinct anime style and his concept Superflat. His idea of the Superflat proposes the blurring of high and low culture in Japanese society as well as the long-lasting tradition of flatness in Japanese paintings. His more modestly priced, mass-produced work, such as his Superflat Museum Convenience Store Editions and stuffed animals, is very much in demand by the Japanese sub-culture of the otaku, which is usually translated as “geek” or “nerd.” His work for the Louis Vuitton fashion house however is in demand as the must-have status item for the well-heeled all around the world.

Multicolore

Internationally recognized Japanese artist Takashi Murakami studied traditional Japanese painting during his schooling. He is best known for his distinct anime style and his concept Superflat. His idea of the Superflat proposes the blurring of high and low culture in Japanese society as well as the long-lasting tradition of flatness in Japanese paintings. His more modestly priced, mass-produced work, such as his Superflat Museum Convenience Store Editions and stuffed animals, is very much in demand by the Japanese sub-culture of the otaku, which is usually translated as “geek” or “nerd.” His work for the Louis Vuitton fashion house however is in demand as the must-have status item for the well-healed all around the world.
takashi murakami

SUPERFLAT MUSEUM
CONVENIENCE STORE EDITION (2003)

The world of the future might be like Japan is today–super flat

written by Debra Lamm

At times referred to as the “Japanese Warhol,” or the “Pop Art Messiah,”1 Takashi Murakami takes the hyper-cute to the extreme with The Superflat Museum Convenience Store Edition, released in December of 2003. The ten miniature, three-dimensional reproductions of some of his sculptural works and paintings, ranging in height from one to four inches, emphasize the Japanese sub-cultural influences of anime and manga, particularly popular among otaku2 and extreme.3 These diminutive figures stand in opposition to the covert culture that inspired them, effectively bridging the gap between high and low art. Similar in form to the cheap anime figurines popular with otaku, Murakami’s Superflat Museum figures also stem from the legacy of Marcel Duchamp’s Boîte en Valise (1961) and the landmark pop collection, Seven Yearbooks, also collaborated on the project.4

The Superflat Museum itself was crafted after prototypes by master figure designer Toru Saegusa, an artist specializing in battle-related manga. The original, miniaturized for the Convenience Store Edition, is a life-sized, three-dimensional model based on a two-dimensional drawing and a life-sized member of Murakami’s Hyper-Flat, art and culture series, Bishojo (beautiful girls). He was well known for his ugly, bishojo toy manufacturer and an artist in his own right, Bome.5 They could be purchased at convenience stores—much like dime-store baseball cards, prompting buyers to collect them all. Superflat began as a reference to the two-dimensionality that Murakami finds inherent in the Japanese visual experience throughout history from woodblock prints to anime. It now endeavors to answer the question, “What is Japan’s own post pop-culture?”6

Using Richard Hamilton’s bullet points of 1956 as a model, he describes it as—childish; introverted; cute; ambiguous, full of contradictions; anti-western; multi-focal; improvised; shabby; amateurish; erotic.7 Hamilton defines Superflat as a direct descendant of pop art.

2. Otaku is a derogatory term that refers to Japanese who are obsessed with anime and manga. There is no exact English equivalent, except possibly “nerd” or “geek.”
4. The Superflat Museum insert included with Miss Ko2 indicates that the toy’s (beautiful girl) was not welcomed at all by the otaku. The original, miniaturized for the Convenience Store Edition, is a life-sized, three-dimensional model based on a two-dimensional drawing and a life-sized member of Murakami’s Hyper-Flat, art and culture series, Bishojo (beautiful girls). He was well known for his ugly, bishojo toy manufacturer and an artist in his own right, Bome.5
7. Ibid.

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The Space Monkey figure is a multiple based on Dalek’s ongoing collection of paintings featuring these characters. The figure is made of resin and stands 9 inches tall. There is a degree of interaction with the figure; it seems quite toy-like. A bonus eyeball can be inserted in either the hole in the Space Monkey’s stomach or the back of its head. The Space Monkey figure is available in four different colors: green (2004), grey (2005), blue (2005), and pink (2006). The figure is a limited edition of only five hundred of each color. The Space Monkey figure is produced by Cerealart and can be purchased on the company’s website, www.cerealart.com.

Dalek takes his inspiration for the Space Monkeys from two different sources, both of which relate to Dalek’s artistic background. The first is a visual connection with Japanese art. Dalek lived for a time in Japan during his childhood. He also was an assistant to Takashi Murakami in the artist’s New York Studio from October 2001 to March 2002. This Japanese influence is most visibly seen in the Space Monkey paintings as the figures read from right to left. The second is his connection with youth culture in the realm of graffiti art. Dalek first noticed graffiti art while attending the Art Institute of Chicago where he was a photography student. He started making his own graffiti works around 1993. The Space Monkeys were born out of this art. The bright colors and clean, simple forms of these characters in his paintings are reminiscent of these graffiti works made earlier in his career.

written by Kathleen Hinkle

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Opened in the fall of 2002, the Wrong Gallery was a collaborative project by artist Maurizio Cattelan along with editors/curators Massimiliano Gioni and Ali Subotnick. During its short life (approximately three years) in the heart of Chelsea's gallery district, the Wrong Gallery mounted exhibitions of work by 40 world-class contemporary artists. The gallery, however, was never actually open. And if it had, certainly wouldn’t have been a welcoming space; it occupied all of two and a half square feet of prime New York real estate. The Wrong Gallery was little more than a locked glass door with a shallow exhibition space behind it. As the three organizing artists explained, “The Wrong Gallery is the back door to contemporary art, and it’s always locked.”1 Yet, Cattelan, Subotnick, and Gioni managed to convince major artists to exhibit. In July of 2005, the Wrong Gallery was evicted from its 20th Street location by the building’s landlord. It was actually part of the property occupied by the Andrew Kreps Gallery; Kreps loaned his basement door to the guerilla curators.2 Of course, with Cattelan and company, it’s difficult to sort fact from fiction. He told The Guardian’s Christopher Turner that they leased the space with the condition that they exhibit the work of the landlord’s wife. “Once a year, we had the Landlord’s Wife Show.”3

By the time the Chelsea location had closed, however, they had already planned for a more outrageous follow-up. They opened a “bootleg” franchise of Gagosian Gallery in Berlin as part of their curation of the 4th Berlin Biennial. The slick gallery opened well before the Biennial itself! They were also invited to install the Wrong Gallery within the 2006 Whitney Biennial, creating an exhibition within an exhibition. And last December, at the invitation of curators there, the Wrong Gallery relocated to the Tate Modern in London, where it is expected to remain for the next few years.

Although both the Wrong Gallery and the Gagosian Gallery, Berlin, actually sold anything, the Wrong Gallery itself is now available for sale as a 1:6 scale model multiple, complete with a continuing series of “exhibitions” (also multiples) that are also available for sale. In Mass Production, the featured exhibitions include Elizabeth Peyton, Adam McEwen, and Lawrence Weiner. As Cattelan says, “The idea is that anyone can play at being a dealer at home. It is a sign of the times. In the ypsos every man could have become an artist, now everyone wants to make money.”4

5. Quoted in Turner, 22.
Works

Compiled by John Berg, The Harry Ransom Center, and Atlantic Richfield Company

Fluxus Collection, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, San Francisco

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Foreword by Robert Elms

Introduction by John Berg

June 1992

Fluxus Editions

Distributed by Interlink Publishing

Price: $49.95

FLUXUS

Collection is a richly illustrated catalogue raisonné of works by Fluxus artists. It includes 249 works of art by 180 artists. Each work is accompanied by a description, a photo or drawing, and an explanation by the artist or a critic. The catalogue also includes a biographical essay on each artist and an introduction by John Berg, the director of the Harry Ransom Center, who has organized this exhibition.

1. Introduction

2. Foreword: Robert Elms

Fluxus is an art movement that began in the 1950s and continued into the 1970s. It was a reaction against the commercialism of the art world and the sterility of the museum. Fluxus artists sought to create a new kind of art that was non-representational and anti-establishment. They used a variety of media, including performance, Happenings, mail art, and Conceptual art.

3. Fluxus Collection

The Fluxus Collection is a collection of works by Fluxus artists. It includes 249 works of art by 180 artists. Each work is accompanied by a description, a photo or drawing, and an explanation by the artist or a critic. The catalogue also includes a biographical essay on each artist and an introduction by John Berg, the director of the Harry Ransom Center, who has organized this exhibition.

4. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection

The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection is a collection of works by Fluxus artists. It includes 249 works of art by 180 artists. Each work is accompanied by a description, a photo or drawing, and an explanation by the artist or a critic. The catalogue also includes a biographical essay on each artist and an introduction by John Berg, the director of the Harry Ransom Center, who has organized this exhibition.

5. Appendix

This appendix contains a list of all the works included in the Fluxus Collection, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, and the Appendix of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection. It also includes a list of the artists included in the Fluxus Collection and the Appendix of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

6. Index

This index contains a list of all the artists included in the Fluxus Collection and the Appendix of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection. It also includes a list of all the works included in the Fluxus Collection and the Appendix of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.
This exhibition offered rewarding opportunities to mobilize its typical scholarly and research-based materials to which our students have contributed. The opportunity to bring the exhibition to London in 2003, and to the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2005, has allowed us to attract new visitors and to engage with a wider audience. The exhibition has been a great success, and we are grateful to all those who have helped make it possible.

Acknowledgments

The exhibition was made possible by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Walker Art Center, Cleveland Museum of Art, and City of London have all contributed in significant ways to the project. And during the exhibition, Miguel Martin, Director of the Walker Art Center, and Laura Rice, Coordinator of the Cleveland Museum of Art, were all generous with their time and expertise. The exhibition was organized by David McCarthy and Marina Pacini at Rhodes College in 2000. Mr. Bengston also managed the administrative aspects of the project with me over the course of its development. Barbara Bradley, an editor at the Mary Schiller Myers School of Art. The Folk Grant supported research in London, among other places, and its generous contribution allowed us to bring the exhibition to London in 2003, and to the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2005.

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Software: Adobe CS2

Typefaces: Text: Myriad Pro
Captions: Univers 65

Paper: Mohawk Navajo 100 lb. Text, Brilliant White
100 lb. Mohawk 50/10 Matte Text, Bright White
Chartham 30 lb. Translucent Clear

Special thanks to Dominic, Jon-Mike, Don and Matt for working far beyond class requirements in order to make this catalog a dynamic artists’ multiple.

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