

## **Fluxus as Neo-Dadaism: Influences and Differences of the Fluxus and Dadaism Movements**

Alireza Asyaban<sup>a</sup>, Ahmad Ebrahimipour<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> M.A. of Visual Communication, Ferdows Higher Education Institute, Mashhad, Iran (Corresponding Author)

<sup>b</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Communication, Ighbal Lahori Higher Education Institute, Mashhad, Iran

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**Abstract:** Fluxus was an inter-media movement established in the 1960s, which was mostly influenced by the artistic approach of the contemporary musician John Cage, featuring many of the Neo-Dadaism styles. This article, which used historical and analytical methods, aimed to revisit and analyze Neo-Dadaism tendencies in the Fluxus movement, and to distinguish it from the earlier forms of Dadaism. The most important Neo-Dadaist themes represented in the works of Fluxus artists include opposition to sensory aesthetics and the replacement of lived art, opposition to the established social values, the development of Merz's style to open up the boundaries of artistic experience, creation of a link between art and life, bridging the gap between the artist and audience, and linking of visual arts with time and place. Dadaism and Fluxus were both affected by the aftermath of wars; however, dadaism responded by destruction to chaos, while Fluxus sought to heal the agonies and pains in many ways. Dada argued that art was not required to be beautiful and that beauty was already dead (e.g., Tzara), while Fluxus maintained that any object could be a work of art and anyone an artist (e.g., Maciunas). Dadaists often used assemblage methods, while the Fluxus artists chose the installation (arrangement) art styles. The works of the Fluxus artists only become meaningful by the time-and space-based experience of the audience, while Dadaist artists only emphasized the absurdity of their works.

**Keywords:** Fluxus Group, Neo-Dadaism, John Cage, George Maciunas, Merz Style

### **Introduction**

Fluxus emerged as an inter-media movement in the 1960s and was greatly inspired by the Dadaist movement in the early twentieth century. It was an international, interdisciplinary community of artists, composers, designers, and poets during the 1960s and 1970s who engaged in experimental art performances which emphasized the artistic process over the finished product. The members of this group were from different countries across the world and were initially influenced by aesthetics theories and the artistic approach of contemporary musician John Cage, as their works represented most of the Neo-Dadaism features. As an artistic movement, Dadaism emerged in response to nationalism, the devastation of wars, and the society which waged wars (Frick, 2015: 18), aiming to destroy the ordinary art and aesthetics of its time. Although the movement was short-lived, its thinking and styles brought about anti-artistic tendencies which influenced groups such as the Fluxus, known as Neo-Dadaism.

This article, which used historical and analytical methods, aimed to revisit and analyze Neo-Dadaism tendencies in the Fluxus movement, and to distinguish it from the earlier forms of Dadaism. Fluxus artists have diverse works from a theme point of view; however, their aesthetic-media approaches are characterized by Neo-Dadaist representations to be addressed in this article. On the other hand, this article sought to demonstrate the differences between the Fluxus as a Neo-Dadaist movement and the early forms of Dadaism in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

In his treatise, "Am I a Fluxus Artist: An exploration of the ideas behind Fluxus, avant-garde ideologies, and the relationship between life and art" (2015), Frick points out the outcomes of wars and modernity on futurists and Dadaists as well as their influence on the Fluxus movement, while at the same time explaining the intellectual distinctions from these movements (Frick, 2015). Included in the seminal

Fluxus works is the George Maciunas' article, represented as the group's main theorist while another salient work is the book *Fluxus Reader* (1998) edited by Ken Friedman.

Moreover, Fluxus statements, including the principal manifesto of Maciunas' writing group and the one by Wolf Vostell, a member of the group, can be found in *Modern Classics 100 Artists' Manifestos: From The Futurists To The Stuckists* (2011). However, as specific research on the influences and differences between Fluxus and Neo-Dadaism is lacking and given the significance and influence of the latter group on contemporary art, the present article uses a historical relationship between the Fluxus group and Dadaism to examine the tendencies of Neo-Dadaism in some of the most important conceptual works by Fluxus artists.

### **Dadaism's anti-artistic features**

Dadaism was an artistic (or anti-artistic) approach consisting of artists from different styles, founded in the second decade of the twentieth century; in fact, Dada or Dadaism was an art movement of the European avant-garde in the early 20th century, with early centers in Zürich, Switzerland, at the Cabaret Voltaire as it released numerous statements, calling for the destruction of taste, artistic styles and the bourgeoisie tendencies in art. Dada considered post-war society as a disintegrated civilization with its art doomed to failure, suggesting "the avant-garde man is forced to commit suicide, when there is nothing left for destruction" (Horvath, 2016: 230 ). The anarchism hidden in Dada's thinking brought about contradictory and self-destructive statements to their manifesto and practices, eventually, leading the Dada movement to die as the members failed their commitments, with its followers being attracted to surrealism and pop art. In its short life, Dadaism was constantly evolving and making changes to its statements and working styles in Berlin (e.g., Raoul Hausmann, Hugo Ball, Kurt Schwitters), Zurich (e.g., Tristan Tzara), and Paris (e.g., Francis Picabia); however, they held some similar positions when it came to art and culture, which we mention in the following:

**Opposition to Aesthetic Zeal and Theories:** The eighteenth century marked the age of aesthetic zeal and artistic theories, while the nineteenth century represented the age of the multiplicity of different "isms" taken from modern aesthetics; thus, the beginning of the twentieth century only saw one prominent artist doing artistic activities, and because it enjoyed the backing of an aesthetic theory, critics and intellectuals called on art audiences to coordinate with these styles. Dada rose in response to such chaos in the art market, and it was a kind of grimace to the sound artist's zeal-based aesthetics. Stating in Dada's manifesto (1918), Tzara said: "a work of art should not be beauty in itself, for beauty is dead" (Peterson, 1971: 22). Dada artists considered artistic taste as a tool held by the bourgeois culture and avoided making a statement in which there was a coherent artistic or aesthetic method that would promote specific tastes. Decades later, the Fluxus artists, as affected by such a perspective, sought to link the everyday life with the art under (Wilmer, 2015: 90), presenting art in more general forms; this is why most Fluxus artists refrained from abstract art.

**The principle of Randomness:** The principle of randomness, that mainly characterizes Dadaist poems, reveals the irrational nature of Dada. Randomness is deemed to be a logical confrontation with the work of art which allows the artist to reduce his/her creative influence to only a few predefined data (Alger, 2011: 14). When a work of art is composed by randomness, the author's objective diminishes, and the role of the audience to interpret the work is signified.

**Absurdism:** Speaking of the social arena, Dada was largely a reaction to the consequences of wars that spread across Europe, as if all the philosophies, moralities, and the adherence of the European man were challenged by observing the calamities of war, and modern aesthetics was deemed to be vain. Speaking of the Berlin Statement, Richard Huelsenbeck suggested that "Dadaism rejects all moral, cultural and spiritual motto as being merely a cover for a loose body, for the first time, no longer countering life aesthetically" (Alger, 2011: 17). Thus, Tzara was quoted in the second statement, saying "Dadaism lacked meaning" (Frick, 2015: 19). Dada aimed to abandon all coherent and reasonable forms of life while adhering to indefinable and non-aesthetic forms, without gaining through a certain way of life or art. This way of thinking is highly similar to absurdism or nihilism. For Dadaists themselves, "it is

not Dada which is far from significance, but it is the nature of our age that is vain" (Alger, 2011: 26); hence, Dada is said to only represent this meaninglessness and absurd art in the world.

**Merz's style:** For centuries, works of art were made with special tools and materials, and only artists were able to work with these tools. To break up the dominance of aesthetics over art, it was first required to set aside those tools and materials forever and to remove the distinction between the artistic material and the non-artistic material. Schwitter rejected the need to use artistic paints and materials, seeking to use every material, even patches of rubbish, for a work of art, calling this a Merz's style.

Schwitter, intending to take part in the 1920 Dada Art Gallery, failed to produce a letter of invitation; however, he introduced his Dada as a Merz's style, which is part of the German word "Kommerzbank" which means a "commercial bank", indicating a sort of confrontation with the capitalist society overwhelming the commodified and commercialized art (Horvath, 2016: 222). Dadaists used the Merz principle to give equal value to all the materials and tools, and to remove the distinction between beautiful and ugly objects; a goal met by Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain" (1917) as it shocked European art.

These features, albeit never represented in a coherent school of art, each of which influenced the European and American artistic styles from the 1960s onwards, and the secondary streams heavily influenced by this feature adopted the more general name of Neo-Dadaism.

### **Neo-Dadaism and Establishment of Fluxus**

In her article "Dada Then and Now" (1963), Barbara Rose, the American art critic, informs of a new generation of American artists who recount the commercialization, explosion, and vanishing of the American dream before their eyes. Included in these styles are Neo-realism, Neo-Dada, Le nouveau réalisme (France), pop art, Neo-vulgarians, Common Objects Painting, and the know-nothing genre (Hamilton Faris, 2015: 4). The most significant Neo-Dada offshoots, making use of modern materials, everyday images, as well as nonsensical and absurd compositions in their works, were pop art, the Fluxus movement, and part of contemporary Japanese art. Although Dadaism was short-lived, it had its impacts on other streams of contemporary art, such as the Fluxus movement, which exposed their aesthetics with less internal contradiction.

Hugo Ball, one of the pioneers of Dadaism, has described other Dadaists as follows: "Upon observing their works as being absurd, I can no longer listen to them." (Alger, 2011: 15). Although it was this internal absurdism of Dadaism that caused its demise, its confrontation with art based on sensory or academic aesthetics helped found Neo-Dadaism in the Fluxus group. The Fluxus movement's manifesto reads: "Let's purge the world of the bourgeois disease, a specialized 'intellectual', and commercialized culture; Let's purge the world of the presence of the dead art, imitation, artificial art, abstract art" (Danchev, 2019: 606). Fluxus is also known as Neo-Dada because it attends to an anti-bourgeois aesthetic approach, and a nonsensical and absurd art (Wilmer, 2015: 91).

The Fluxus group was a community of contemporary artists (especially German and American artists) since the 1960s, engaged in experimental art performances which emphasized the artistic process over the finished products; they brought about influential works using some deconstruction ideas, inspiring many artists across the world. As a pioneer of this movement, George Maciunas was a Lithuanian American artist, born in Kaunas. A founding member and the central coordinator of Fluxus, an international community of artists, architects, composers, and designers. He also held the first Fluxus Festival in Germany in 1962 (Danchev, 2019: 604).

The primary ideas held by the group about the randomness of the work of art, absence of order, attention to the way a process is performed instead of the importance of the final product, and emphasis on the time-based work, were initially influenced by the "Experimental Composition Classes" by John Cage (1912-1992) during the 1950s. The first members of the Fluxus movement included students and informal guests admitted to the Cage classes, not having specialties in music but that followed his aesthetics and philosophy of art. The most notable artists who first joined the Fluxus were Joseph Beuys, Dick Higgins, Nam June Paik, La Monte Thornton Young, Emmett Williams, Benjamin Patterson, Yoko Ono, Wolf Vostell (Danchev, 2019: 604), Philip Corner, and George Brecht. Some of these artists were

sometimes called the members of the "Proto-Fluxus" movement, implicitly referring to the original Fluxus group. The number of artists who joined the group after the 1960s is plenty and for this, Table 1 suffices to describe the selection of the characteristics of these artists.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the most prominent artists of the Fluxus group from the 1960s to 2020, (Sources: authors).

Name	Born	Died	Nationality	Known for
George Maciunas	1931	1978	France	Central Coordinator of Fluxus Conceptual Artist
Joseph Beuys	1921	1986	Germany	Installation Artist Sculptor Conceptual Artist Pedagogue Happening Artist Art Theorist Performance Artist Graphic Artist
Nam June Paik	1932	2006	South Korea	Installation Performance Artist Video Artist
Yoko Ono	1933	-	Tokyo	Singer Performance Artist Song Writer

Philip Corner	1933	-	The U.S.	Composer Artist Alphornist Vocalist Trombonist
John Cage	1912	1992	The U.S.	Musician Composer Music Theorist Philosopher
George Brecht	1926	2008	U.S.	Conceptual Artist Composer Artist
Robert Filliou	1926	1987	France	Happening Artist Sculptor Film Maker Poetry
Geoffrey Hendricks	1931	2018	The U.S.	Happening Artist Intermedia Artist Performance Artist
Dick Higgins	1938	1998	The U.S.	Print Maker Intermedia Artist Composer Artist Poetry
Alison Knowles	1933	-	The U.S.	Sound Worker Print Maker Performance Artist Installation Artist Visual Artist
Wolf Vostell	1932	1998	Germany	Installation Artist Happening Artist Video Artist Sculptor Painter
Robert Watts	1923	1988	The U.S.	Performance Artist Conceptual Artist Mail Artist

Emmett Williams	1925	2007	U.S.	Visual Artist Conceptual Artist	Poetry
Benjamin Patterson	1934	2016	The U.S.	Cornerstone of Fluxus	Musician
Takako Saito	1929	-	Japan	Visual Artist Performance Artist	Sculptor Installation Artist
Tomas Schmit	1943	2006	Germany	Drawing	Author
Erik Anderson	1940	-	Denmark	Singer	Song Writer
Genpei Akasegawa	1937	2014	Japan	Happening Artist	Neo-Dada
Benjamin Vautier	1935	-	France	Performance Artist	Lettrism
Joe Jones	1934	1993	U.S.	Creation of rhythmic music machines	Musician
Mieko Shiomi	1938	-	Japan	Composer Artist	Poetry
Shigeko Kubota	1937	2015	Japan	Video Artist Performance Artist	Sculptor
Alfred Earl (Al) Hansen	1927	1995	The U.S.	Performance Artist Conceptual Artist	Neo-Dada Art professor
Milan Knížák	1940	-	Czech	Graphic Artist Performance Artist	Musician Installation Artist Visual Artist
La Monte Thornton Young	1935	-	The U.S.	Musician	Composer Artist
Henry Flynt	1940	-	The U.S.	Musician Activist Visual Artist	Philosopher
Raymond Edward Johnson	1927	1995	The U.S.	Correspondence Artist Conceptual Artist Performance Artist	Intermedia Artist Neo-Dada
Richard Vance Maxfield	1927	1969	The U.S.	Composer of instrumental	Electronic Musician
Charlotte Moorman	1933	1991	U.S.	Performance Artist	Cellist

Dieter Roth (Diter Rot)	1930	1998	Swiss	Installation Artist Book Artist	Poetry Sculptor
Caroloe Schneemann	1939	2019	U.S.	Performance Artist Happening Artist	Visual Art Neo-Dada
Larry Miller	1944	-	The U.S.	Performance Artist Installation Artist	Intermedia Artist
Bengt Af Klintberg	1938	-	Sweden	Ethnologist	Author
Daniel Spoerri	1930	-	Swiss	Lettrism Conceptual Artist	Dadaism
Ken Friedman	1949	-	The U.S.	International Laboratory for experimental art	Architecture Designer Musician
Davi Det Hompsom (David E. Thompson)	1939	1996	The U.S.	Performance Artist Conceptual Artist Book Artist	Painter Sculptor Writer
Joseph Byrd (Proto-Fluxus)	1937	-	The U.S.	Conceptual Artist Arranger Producer	Vocalist Minimalist Musician
Takao Iijima (Ay-O)	1931	-	Japan	Artist Print Maker	Painter Happening

Most of these artists work in different settings outside the formal academic contexts of art. Theoretical aesthetics and the creation of works of art are seen to have been intertwined in their professions, with many of them compiling articles and books on the community of art, art history, contemporary aesthetics, anthropology, and even ethnology (e.g., Bengt Af Klintberg, the Swedish artist). In the meantime, an artist such as Henry Flynt is thought to be a philosopher at first, while at the same time having a close relationship with Fluxus as an artist. For this, and because of the myriad themes and working styles of this group, it is essential to pay attention to the shared philosophy and ideological basics linking the members of the group for decades.

The influence of John Cage, the contemporary American composer, is seen to have dominated many of the works and statements of these artists. Cage was highly regarded by postmodern aesthetics advocates to be a pioneer in works of art. The following are some of Cage's artistic impressions on the Fluxus group.

1. The important role of the composer or performer and non-adherence to common artistic tools or materials, and the increasing impact of this view on different contemporary composers (Donahue, 2016: 1).
2. Uncertainty and the role of chance in performing a work of art.
3. Concentration on the space-based experience of the work instead of the final product (Donahue, 2016: 29).
4. Non-determination of the product's meaning and leaving the audience to understand the meaning. In this regard, Cage states, "The meaning of the product we perform is determined by the individual people who see or hear it" (Donahue, 2016: 27).

The most impressive influence Cage had on the Fluxus was the fact that he emphasized the artistic process over the finished product. He also emphasized that a product is not merely a visual or audio sign to be shared with the audience, rather, for him, the product is created by the artist at a specific time and place, and then experienced by the audience at a specific time and place. Considering this, the Fluxus movement brings the visual arts closer to the essence of music, theater or dance because theater and dance are the art genres that constantly evolve and are understood over time (Dezeuze, 2006: 59).

This is while, Dadaism, is disappointed with creating a non-sensory art product and fails to provide a lived experience for the audience, while only protesting sensory or aesthetic art. In his analysis of the work "Mechanical Head" (1920), Raoul Hausmann says that this sculpture shows that "human reason only consists of a few belongings attached to his head from outside" (Alger, 2011: 40). Fluxus embraces this critique by Dadaism but seeks to maintain reason always fresh, unrepeatable, and unique through the audience's space-based experience. As a result, a work of art should not be confined to a specific subject, subject, tool, or individual.

### **Neo-Dadaism Tendencies in the Works of the Fluxus Group**

According to Maciunas, the Fluxus movement has been inspired by such Dadaist artists as Marcel Duchamp, John Cage, and the random art of Allan Kaprow (Wilmer, 2015: 91). Like Dada, Fluxus does not attach importance to a particular manner, substance, subject, or object in art, and does not oblige the artist to have a specific competence or genius, and as stated in the Fluxus manifesto, anything can be an art and anyone can be an artist (Wilmer, 2015: 90). Fluxus artists developed Merz's style and expanded the boundaries of artistic substance, subject, and tools. They followed Schwitter's goal of bringing the boundaries between the arts closer (Horvath, 2016: 227); however, there are major differences between Fluxus, as a Neo-Dadaism approach, and the older form of Dadaism.

First, it should be borne in mind that Neo-Dada does not encounter self-contradictory and self-destructive status when confronting with aesthetics and the bourgeoisie art, thus enjoying greater internal coherence. Dada sought to de-materialize the work of art by patching absurd events together. On the contrary, Fluxus aims to underestimate the objectivity and materiality of the product to turn it into an "experience"; an experience to be encountered by the audience, not the critics or aestheticians.

Neo-Dadaism requires something beyond the assemblage of unrelated objects to create an artistic experience. To counter artistic genius, Dada opted for the method of assemblage, but Fluxus artists such as George Brecht chose to arrange objects to provide the audience with a time-based perception in addition to a space-based perception (Dezeuze, 2006: 58 & 59). The audience only observes an assembled object in a particular place; however, to understand the arrangement, it is required to spend some time relating the building blocks of an arrangement. While Tzara always held that the work of art was important only in relation to a particular moment in time (Paterson, 1971: 22), Fluxus' Neo-Dadaist approach seeks to help the audience experience a work of art over time not just at a given moment in time.

The destructivism and absurdist spirit of Dadaism was also revealed in the first Fluxus Festival held in Germany in 1962. In his "Piano Activity" piece, Philip Corner called on the composers to perform the piece while playing, lining, scratching, and tapping on the sandboard and the piano lid. The outcome which resulted in a broken piano was televised many times in Germany and European countries (Danchev, 2019: 604).

The sound, composed in collaboration with Williams, Maciunas, Petersen, Higgins, and Knowles, was recorded and released on screen. Included in these sounds, the commotion of the audience can also be heard, intermingled with the piano sounds as well as the impacts hit on the piano body (URL1). Like Dada, this work by the Fluxus can be seen as a reaction to the calamities of the war. However, while Fluxus considers "absurdism" to be indicative of the numbing truths of wars such as Auschwitz, Hiroshima, and Vietnam (Bryan-Wilson, 2003: 105), one would see that a living experience of what has befallen a contemporary man can be invoked.

"Dada inherently calls for resistance and refusal" (Horvath, 2016: 230); this is while, Fluxus artists do not call for destruction, rather they seek to contemplate on the destroyed culture and civilization; thereby healing the bewildered human beings living in modern ruins. These characteristics are represented in the work of Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), one of the most prominent members of the Fluxus group. Beuys, who, at one point in his artistic career cooperated with the Fluxus group, was undoubtedly one of the key figures in the development of conceptual performances across Europe, as well as the United States.



**Picture 1.** Philip Corner. Piano activity (1962). URL 2: <https://www.moma.org>

Beuys' art serves as a kind of protest and of an expression to replace modern art with some spiritual art, to eliminate the cultural gap between the aesthetic concerns of the elite and the concrete living agonies of people as a whole. One of his main concerns is language failure. The language of words, as well as the language of aesthetics, is so rich in philosophical and artistic contexts that it has lost its healing and reconciling function. Modern art aims to establish communication with and influence the audience, rather than to help improve their living world. Beuys does not want to be exemplary for the audience to see and hear better, rather intends to engage the audience in the experience of recovery and reconciliation.

For this, Beuys sometimes shares his real-life story. For example, in "I Like America and America Likes Me" (1974), he simulates the story of his plane crash and healing by the natives in a few-day performance, bringing to the stage his recovery beside a coyote (A fox-like creature) in a room. He gets his audience to accompany not with the images of this performance, but with the spirit of the space-based experience of this performance, thus linking his imagination with his lived experiences and seeking to recreate his own recovery experience. Here, in this performance, he uses some materials with which he has had some personal experience and applies Merz's style to expand his emotions.



**Picture 2.** Joseph Beuys. I Like America and America Likes me (1974). URL 3: <https://www.tate.org.uk>. Photo credit Caroline Tisdall © DACS 200

Beuys often creates a new story of his performance; a story with mythical rather than rational roots in a modern sense. An example of such stories can be found in "How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare?" (1965) where Beuys poses as a magician (shaman) and uses magic for healing. While we know that Beuys is greatly influenced by shamanism and their healing beliefs, this performance tends to be an irony to the futile attempt of standard and academic art and culture to heal the soul of contemporary man. On the other hand, however, it refers to the inefficiency of the role of language in establishing communication with the environment and other creatures. Just as Dadaists maintained that "instructions, decrees, and the conveying of information bereaves language of its value and status" (Alger, 2011: 14), Beuys also calls for a meta-speech and meta-writing language that transcends the living or dead beings.

The thinking approach of Fluxus can also be observed in the works of Nam June Paik. Paik, also known as the leader of video art, is thought of the most influential artists in the Fluxus movement, who has criticized media culture in his arrangement styles, engaging the intellectual and general audience in a common concern of media realism by using public visual media such as cameras and television. In "TV Buddha" arrangement (1974), although Paik eliminates geographical intra-cultural boundaries and creates an intercultural conflict between East and West, his living motionless video of the Buddha placement in front of his image on television, involves composure that is reminiscent of the human need of Zen meditation on the image the media presents to him. Hence, although Fluxus has inherited the spirit of destructivism and being anti-art from Dada, it, like the TV Buddha, follows through the creation of anti-civilization, anti-order, and meta-language experiences, behind this destruction.

However, in the mid-1960s, pioneers of Dadaism, like Raoul Hausmann considered Neo-Dadaism to be more absurd than Dadaism. They advocated the constructive experience that laid behind the absurd repetitions of original Dadaism, arguing that Dadaism pursued art despite its anti-artistic spirit (Friedman, 1998: 175). These words may hold pop art because we know that Hausmann supported the Maciunas and Fluxus activities.

*Fluxus can also be called "Neo-Dada". Maciunas had some correspondence with one of the founders of the Berlin Dada, named Raoul Hausmann. Hausman advised him to adhere to the name "Fluxus". They shared some common ground, as they were characterized by an anti-art motive (also found in the Fluxus Manifesto), a tendency to subversion, reliance on the game element, and extreme zeal in performance, all of which were consistent with Dada's ideas and interests (Danchev, 2017: 605).*

Maciunas himself emphasized Dadaism's influence on Fluxus. He maintained that each object could be used to create a work of art and that anyone could be an artist. In a paper entitled "Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art" (1962), he demonstrates how Dadaism's absurdism and abstraction reveal themselves in Neo-Dadaism-based Fluxus. Here, abstractionism stands against concreteness. For Maciunas, arts are concretized to reality sometimes by time, sometimes by space, and sometimes by space-time. Arts are concretized, and when reaching the ultimate concreteness, that is, when they become completely dependent on space or time or space-time, they go beyond the boundaries of art and become anti-art or art-nihilism (Maciunas, 25: 1988). Accordingly, unlike modern abstract art, Fluxus artists seek to identify their works along with time or space.

An example of this concretized art can be found in the "Cut Piece" performed by Yoko Ono (1963), a Japanese multimedia artist, singer, and wife of John Lennon (famous Beatles singer). A pioneer in new art forms and a combination of different art media, she sat on the stage of the Kyoto Concert Hall and called on the individual participants to cut her clothes with scissors into pieces. Thus, the artist destroys the passive and neutral relationship with the viewer of the work of art and engages the audience in the act of "cutting" (Darabi, 2004: 11). That is why Ono believes that art is a "verb" and not a "noun".



**Picture 3.** Yoko Ono. Cut Piece (1964). URL 4: <https://www.phaidon.com/>.

*Cut Piece* has caused a sensation inspired much discussion. After the initial performance, Ono mentioned that one of the purposes of the show was to share and give a part of her best. That's why she chose to wear her best suit. In one of her early interviews, she said, "It was a form of giving, giving and taking. It was a kind of criticism against artists, who are always giving what they want to give. I wanted people to take whatever they wanted to, so it was very important to say you can cut wherever you want to. And she also mentioned that part of her inspiration came from [Buddhism](#).

This work which was performed ten years before Abramovic's "Rhythm 0", involves some feminist interpretations, and is an attempt to "no longer speaking" and only "remind" the violence of war (Bryan-Wilson, 2003: 104). Schwitters remarked that Merz was a reaction to cutting into pieces and the war. "Everything of any kind is cut and fragmented, and new things must be patched out of cut pieces: and that is the meaning of Merz" (Reddy, 2009: 1). Ono reacts to the war by getting the audience to cut her clothes into pieces, but this action takes place not in chaos, but annoying silence. Ono's product is not assembled patching, but the presence of a human body, as well as clothes, cut into pieces and taken away by the audience; this occurs at a time when observers are concerned with the work, and this is an example of the concretized art Maciunas has discussed.

## Conclusion

Although Dadaism was a destructive and self-destructive movement, it heavily influenced the offshoots later known as Neo-Dadaism. The Fluxus movement, which is one of these offshoots, is influenced by Dadaism in several ways:

- Opposition to sensory aesthetics and replacement of the experienced art.
- Elimination of the ruling social order and culture and confrontation with the established values in the community.
- Development of Merz's style to adopt boundaries of art experience.
- Establishment of a link between art and life, and removal of the gap between the artist and the audience and
- Concreteization of visual arts with time and space.

However, there are major differences between the initial form of Dadaism and the Fluxus artists, which are as follows:

- Dadaism rebelled against established anomalies and values and responded to chaos with destruction; however, in many cases, Fluxus sought to meditate on the chaos and heal the agonies (rather than to eliminate anomalies).

- Dada demonstrated that art did not have to be beauty and that beauty was already dead (e.g., Tzara) while Fluxus maintained that anything can be a work of art and anyone can be an artist (e.g., Maciunas). Nihilism is inherent in both thinking movements; however, Dadaism targets beauty, while Fluxus makes it indefinitely limited.

- Dadaists often used the assemblage method, while Fluxus artists opted for the arrangement style with time given a key role.

- Dadaism opposed the work fixed in time, therefore adopting a work of art only in relation to a specific moment in time; however, the Fluxus artists emphasized the concept of "experience of the work".

In general, one would say that Dadaists were more serious opponents, but their final say was more artistic, aesthetic, and materialistic; this is while the Fluxus pioneers, like Beuys and Paik, had a contemplative and healing spirit along with their opposition. Their artistic product was found to be far from materialistic and aesthetic processes. The works of Fluxus artists are only made meaningful by the time- and space-based experience of the audience, while Dadaist artists insisted on the absurdity of their works.

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