

**Get Close: Interpersonal Art in the 1970s**

by

Brad Anthony Derro

---

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the

SCHOOL OF ART

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS  
WITH A MAJOR IN ART HISTORY

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2016

## STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

The thesis titled, *Get Close: Interpersonal Art in the 1970s*, prepared by Brad Derro has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for a master's degree at the University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that an accurate acknowledgement of the source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: Brad Derro

## APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:

---

Larry Busbea  
Associate Professor of Art History

August, 10, 2016  

---

Date

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, a thank you to the Art History department and faculty for their assistance and opportunity to pursue higher education here at the University of Arizona. My sincere gratitude goes to Larry Busbea, for his honesty, encouragement, guidance and direction of this thesis. In addition, I am appreciative of the professors who challenged me to excel at a higher level than I thought possible. Though the past two years have been hectic at times, I am grateful to the colleagues and friendships which have flourished in the past two years, particularly Judith Rodenbeck who took the time to enlighten and ignite this project.

I have no words to express how thankful I am to my parents and family for their unconditional love and support. And finally, I would not be here without the support, trust, and love of my colleague, and partner in crime, Janette Ruiz.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review.....	6
Chapter 2: Games and Play: Allan Kaprow’s Interpersonal Relationships.....	16
Chapter 3: Reflect: Self-Reflexive Art c. 1970.....	33
Chapter 4: Conclusion.....	48
Figures.....	51
Bibliography.....	62

## ABSTRACT

This thesis centers on an analysis of Allan Kaprow's *Activities* (1970-1979)—works that gauged how people interact when following a script that often involved ostensibly banal, everyday routines; for example, brushing one's teeth, or walking through a doorway. These pieces, as suggested in the artist's writings, were influenced by a range of philosophical and sociological theories. While Kaprow associated his *Activities* with the sociological and philosophical enquiries of John Dewey, Erving Goffman, and Ray Birdwhistell, I will also suggest that concepts related to interpersonal psychology and social transaction theory were just as significant. In particular I will discuss the parallel development of Transactional Analysis, a concept defined by the psychologist Eric Berne. Kaprow's works aligned interpersonal events and an early form of "relational aesthetics," a term coined later by contemporary art critic Nicolas Bourriaud. The resulting works were art that bordered on sociological and psychological experimentation.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction and Literature Review

#### Introduction

Art relies on the artist and spectator relationship, particularly the latter's participation and engagement with the object. Putting the canvas and paint aside, artists in the sixties and seventies integrated the body into their work as the preferred medium. By eliminating the distance between the viewer and the canvas, artists blurred the gap between art and life, converting the spectator into participant. The legendary "blurring" was precisely that: an indistinct domain of unclarity: artlike life and lifelike art. Out of these practices and their engagements with process and, importantly, with behavior, grew the twinned performative, immaterial, hybrid projects of conceptual and systems art.<sup>1</sup> Beginning in the sixties, artist Allan Kaprow created scripts, which accompanied his work throughout the seventies. These scripts served as directions that informed and guided participants through the artwork, rather than merely looking at it. Read as an instruction manual, the directions' simplicity allows participants to engage introspectively with their surroundings.

Although Kaprow questions and examines the art/life dichotomy, his artwork prompts questions from scholars, mainly, why are these works considered art and not merely an experiment? Through the analysis of philosophy (pre and post Kaprow's art), participation, space and time, and the recent scholarship of relational aesthetics, art historians, critics, and artists alike attempt to answer such questions in order to define this illusive binary. I will explore these

---

<sup>1</sup> Judith Rodenbeck, *Radical Prototypes*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2011), 251.

themes in three chapters. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction and literature review. Chapter 2, “Games and Play: Allan Kaprow’s Interpersonal Relationships,” analyzes three works, *Warm-Ups* (1975), *Comfort Zones* (1975), and *Maneuvers* (1976). Here, I will relate Kaprow’s *Activities* to the theories of the aforementioned scholars, suggesting the fluidity between art and life. Questioning gestural movement and oratory communication, or rather verbal and non-verbal communication between two people, Berne and Kaprow allow participants the freedom to alter the experiment or performance, creating a unique and introspective experience in often unfamiliar environments. Chapter 3, “Reflect: Self-Reflexive Art c. 1970” enlarges the analysis to include two of Kaprow’s contemporaries—Dan Graham and Lygia Clark—and their use of the mirror to instantiate particular modes of interpersonal dynamics.

### Literature Review

A prolific writer and art theorist, Allan Kaprow’s writings offer scholars a rare insight into his art and life, for instance, his intrigue of social relations and interactions. Art historian Gillian Sneed cites Kaprow’s art and writings as the pendulum that swings between her analysis of contemporary “relational” art practices and art criticism. In her essay, “From Happenings to Conversations: Allan Kaprow’s Legacy in Contemporary “Relational” Art Practices” (2010), Sneed refers to contemporary artists Tino Seghal and Rirkrit Tiravanija and critics Donald Kuspit and Claire Bishop, in an effort to trace the genealogy of contemporary relational art practices back to Kaprow’s seminal writings. From the onset, Sneed suggests her essay will posit Seghal as the historical culmination of Kaprow’s requirements for successful consciousness-raising activities, which also meet Claire Bishop and Donald Kuspit’s aesthetic standards. Successively acknowledging Bishop and Kuspit, Sneed categorizes their criticism into an

empirical analysis, particularly in reference to Bishop's essay "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents" (2006), in which the critic addresses "relational" art practices, a term derived from Nicolas Bourriaud's text *Relational Aesthetics*. Bishop, Sneed asserts, discusses the art/life binary, preparing the reader with a background to Kaprow's Happenings, which "are events that, put simply, happen."<sup>2</sup>

Relying on Bishop's and Kuspit's writing, Sneed examines the contemporary performance artists Rikrit Tiravanija (*Untitled 1992-Free*) and Tino Seghal (*This Progress*, 2010). Tiravanija's *Untitled 1992-Free* invites museum visitors to stop by, sit down and eat Thai curry with the artist, creating a friendly relationship between artist and audience. Unlike Tiravanija's chance approach, Seghal's scripted performance engages visitors in conversation with a series of "interpreters," as they ascend the stairs of the Guggenheim museum in New York. The "interpreters" follow visitors, engaging in dialogue, delimiting the relationship between art, artist, and viewer. In opposition to Kaprow, Kuspit and Bishop believe successful art should be "privileged and independent in some way."<sup>3</sup> Bishop calls for aesthetic judgments that maintain a more complicated imbrication of the social and the aesthetic, whereas Kuspit calls for the elimination of the blurring of art and life altogether, and the reinstatement of the high culture values of traditional aesthetics. Championing Seghal throughout the essay, Sneed acknowledges how the artist fills the gap between Bishop and Kuspit's criticism, while maintaining Kaprowian characteristics. Seghal's, *This Progress*, functions as "games, governed

---

<sup>2</sup>Gillian Sneed, "From Happenings to Conversations: Allan Kaprow's Legacy in Contemporary "Relational" Art Practices," *Art Criticism*, Vol. 25, Issue 1-2, 75.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

by detailed rules... [which reward] those who play along.<sup>4</sup> Kaprow's *Activities* revere games and play as well, however, the reward—if applicable—is one's introspective discovery.

In the margins of his copy of John Dewey's book, *Art as Experience*, Kaprow writes, "Art not separate from experience... what is an authentic experience... environment is a process of interactions."<sup>5</sup> Dewey's writings were influential in the fifties and sixties, particularly for artists and scholars, as embodied by Fluxus artists and John Cage's silent piece, *4'33*. " Recognizing this connection, art historian Judith Rodenbeck applies Duchamp's "creative act" to Cage's piece, who illustrates one of the purest examples of Umberto Eco's open work—that is, a work that requires participatory engagement from its audience. Similar to Sneed, Rodenbeck begrudgingly concedes to Bourriaud, suggesting relational aesthetics are predicated on the activation of the audience.<sup>6</sup> Bourriaud's claim, to some extent reinforced by Bishop's work, is that this new art "in no way draws sustenance from any reinterpretation of this or that past aesthetic movement."<sup>7</sup> Although Bourriaud builds a useful frame reiterating "relational aesthetics," Rodenbeck argues against his dismissal of sixties art practices. Citing contemporary philosopher David Novitz's definition of participatory art, which suggests any physical engagement is "participation," Rodenbeck implies two definitions. The first definition "understands participation in a more active sense as an extension of motor engagement and cognitive apprehension." Referring to artists like Seghal, Andrea Fraser and Janet Cardiff, Rodenbeck avers the predictability and reliance of their work on the museum as a readymade

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 83. Sneed cites Anne Midgette, who attributes playfulness to Seghal's performance. Further, Sneed quotes Kaprow, who suggests, "Play is at the heart of experimentation... [which] also involves attention to the normally unnoticed."

<sup>5</sup> Judith Rodenbeck, *Radical Prototypes*. (MIT Press, 2011), 246. Rodenbeck cites Jeff Kelley's introduction to Kaprow in, *Essays on the Blurring of art and life*.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 247.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 248. Rodenbeck cites Bourriaud, whose 1998 book *Relational Aesthetics* is based on contemporary artists and exhibitions in the 1990s. These artists present their work as a "social interstice," which explore interhuman relations in the public environment.

object. The second definition is predicated on the notion of how one participates—understanding that participation involves conscious decision-making and chance. Dismissing sixties artists and writings, Bourriaud evades a number of key concerns raised at the moment when art broke out into multiple dimensions.<sup>8</sup> Although Rodenbeck defines the need for *Activities* as being a requirement for participants—the artist, curator, and writer, Paul O’Neill suggests otherwise in his three stages of public participation.

In continued pursuance of “relational aesthetics,” O’Neill proposes that Anglo-American critiques of Bourriaud’s analysis tend to overlook the stated tendency for art to be construed primarily through participation (rather than authorial production). In, “Three stages in the art of public participation: The relational, social and durational,” O’Neill appropriately divides the essay while referencing critics and philosophers; Clair Bishop, Jacques Ranciere, Gilles Deleuze, and Henri Bergson. In a similar vein to Rodenbeck, O’Neill references modernist exhibitions in the early twentieth century (Duchamp, Kiesler and Lissitzky), which were central to the shift towards relational forms of participation in the sixties and seventies. The viewer’s participation and involvement in these exhibition spaces were required, as they were to navigate through the space, maneuvering around objects to look at objects. O’Neill references Jacques Ranciere (*Problems and Transformations in Critical Art*) who suggests relational art intends to create not only objects but also situations and encounters. But this too simple opposition between objects and situations operates a short-circuit, attributed to the restrictions within the participatory framework. Relational art evolved into the latter half of the twentieth century, however, art became a part of public space, relocating from the gallery to the city—works became relational with daily life. The recent social turn in art has also prompted what Bishop refers to as an ethical

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 257.

turn in art criticism, with heightened attention being paid to how good collaborations are executed and judged rather than how aesthetic objects are experienced.<sup>9</sup> Changing the once static spectator into an active participant, artists, such as Jeanne van Heeswijk, created a public space of contact through interactions with others. Drawing the parallel between art and philosophy, O'Neill calls attention to Deleuze's subjectivation process—the construction of the individual subject. The group's summation is dependent on individualized parts, each contributing to the collective—like the nuts and bolts of a machine. Transitioning from the exhibition and public environment, O'Neill discusses durational works, such as Tiravanija's *The Land*—an ongoing project since 1998.<sup>10</sup> Henri Bergson suggests duration is not only a psychological experience—a transitory state of being—it is also the concrete evolution of creativity. To understand duration, something must shift in time for the participant—change is necessary as it alters the temporal process within space and time. Comparable to Kaprow, O'Neill's three stages suggest relational art moves away from the museum or gallery space—enmeshing with the everyday environment.

Many scholars have sought to understand Kaprow's intentions. One such scholar, Laura Cull, discusses Kaprow through the lens of performance art. As a performance artist herself, and current Head of the Department of Dance and Theatre at the University of Surrey in the UK, Cull poses the question: What is the relationship between performance and philosophy? Considering the implications philosophy has on art history, Cull's essays, "Attention Training Immanence and ontological participation in Kaprow, Deleuze and Bergson," and "Performance as

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. O'Neill cites Bishop from "The Social Turn," suggesting the social collaboration between participant and artist, with the former acting as co-collaborators.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Tiravanija's work, based in Chiang Mai, is an ongoing participatory performance where artists engage and conduct projects among the rice paddies, and vegetable fields—the value of which is counted primarily in terms of sustainability and utility.

Philosophy: Responding to the Problem of ‘Application’” attempt to answer her question, although, like Kaprow’s *Activities*, Cull is left with an open ended response.

In “Attention Training,” Cull analyzes Kaprow’s *Activities* alongside the immanent thinking of Deleuze and Bergson. Proposing a threefold approach (Metaphysical reality, ontological participation, attention), Cull assesses the spectator and participant binary. Performance involves ontological participation as it affects ‘emotions,’ it takes the real that forces us to think, producing new concepts. Kaprow’s *Activities* encourage participant’s attention toward their thinking bodies as a site of lived change and as immanent or embedded in, rather than transcendent to, the world as change. For Deleuze, immanence is the unconscious itself, and the conquest of the unconscious. Cull suggests that Kaprow’s *Activities* are best understood as attention-training exercises that affirm our ontological participation in immanence, change and movement. Like Deleuze, Kaprow conceives of the real in terms of an ontology of change.<sup>11</sup> This lived change, as Cull suggests, is another way of describing ontological participation. Cull underscores Kaprow’s pursuit of audience participation, which stems from his motivation to have a co-authorial relationship, comparative to O’Neill’s allusions to public art. Whereas Deleuze examines difference or change, Henri Bergson argues for both change and movement, stating: “Movement is reality itself.”<sup>12</sup> Within this movement, Kaprow asserts that meaning and experience are contingent on the body and mind. Although Kaprow recognizes the routinization in everyday actions, he understands that the activity relies upon multiple circumstances. To avoid slipping into routine behavior, Cull posits that Kaprow uses ‘feedback devices’—which alter how participants respond to the action they are performing. One example the author gives is

---

<sup>11</sup> Laura Cull, “Attention Training Immanence and Ontological participation in Kaprow, Deleuze, and Bergson,” *Performance Research*, 16:4, 83.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 82. Cull cites Bergson’s *The Creative Mind*.

alterations of speed. In *Rates of Exchange* (1975), Kaprow breaks down the routine of a handshake, slowing down the behavior to the point where the initial activity becomes obscure; something else altogether. Kaprow modifies the temporal and immanent experience, converting the exchange into a new action or gesture. Cull's focus on Kaprow's attention-training exercises opens up a new perspective and interpretation for scholars, who will recognize the subtle, practically nonexistent, separation between performance and life.

Two problems trouble the relationship between performance and philosophy: application and waiting. In "Performance as Philosophy," Cull ascertains performance theorists often look to philosophy for the next method. The application is a game of transference, or rather as Cull suggests, "a kind of methodological hylomorphism."<sup>13</sup> The philosopher or philosophically minded performance theorists' study of a given play or performance must allow new ideas to be created, ideas that the thinker has not already developed on the basis of some other encounter.<sup>14</sup> Kaprow placed little value on artworks which provoke only the mind rather than providing participants with 'experienced insight.' One aspect of achieving this insight is derived from the second problem Cull mentions: waiting. According to Bergson (*The Creative Mind*), art enriches our present, but it also enables us to go beyond it in order to witness the fundamental change that constitutes metaphysical reality. In other words, art defines itself in presentness, not by its changing environment. In an example cited by Deleuze, Cull refers to an analogy in which Bergson impatiently waits for a sugar cube to dissolve in water, thus affecting his time, as duration becomes part of daily action. Comparing Bergson's experience to Kaprow's *Level*<sup>15</sup>,

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 21. Here, Cull refers to how scholarship defines the term.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Allan Kaprow's *Level* from 1970s asked participants to place a block of ice and bale of straw next to each other. As the ice would melt, participants had to reduce the straw, inducing a rhythm between themselves and the ice.

Cull challenges the philosophy and art dialectic, only to conclude that a direct answer is a provisional one.

Philosophy and sociology play a significant role in Kaprow's artwork as well as relational aesthetics. Reviewing current scholarship, however, there are few, if any, discussions regarding the psychological implications within his art. A recent essay by Nick Parkinson, "Speaking Directly: An Examination of Symbol and Communication in Kaprow's Happenings," refers to Kaprow's work under this provision. Parkinson analyzes Kaprow's works, specifically his Happenings (*Pastorale, Communication, Household, Beauty Parlor-1958*), tracing the artist's departure and ultimate transition into *Activities (Take off 1974)*. Parkinson attempts to compare these works with the aesthetic experience proffered by psychoanalyst Ronald Fairbairn. Happenings, according to Parkinson, had a tangible physical object with which participants could interact, unfortunately for Kaprow, participants did not adhere to the script, either because they were misinformed or simply distracted. In this artist/participant relationship, Kaprow became the conductor rather than the artist. At times, participants thought the artist's demands were too obtuse, leaving the artwork in disarray. Opposed to being the director, Kaprow's involvement as participant in *Activities* leveled the hierarchical distinction between artist and spectator. Participants questioned the meaning of the task, discovering their own sensorial experience. Parkinson's analysis of Kaprow's art within the framework of Fairbairn's psychoanalytical approach is sparse, however, he cites the psychoanalyst's observation between artist and participant. The transition of Kaprow's work from Happenings to *Activities* loses the object, and instead relies on everyday routines that serve to challenge an individual's comfort rather than remaining monotonous event. The object, Parkinson attests, is what bridges the gap between artist and audience. In contradistinction to Parkinson's argument, I propose rather, Kaprow has a

firm grasp on the object, he merely redefined the object in art. The new object is the individual participant, whose experiences are individualized, unique and omnipresent. Toward the end of his essay, Parkinson realizes his assessment of Fairbairn can be objectified and questioned, thus leaving a mere formal analysis of Kaprow's work rather than an attempt to further decipher the illusive art/life binary.

The interest surrounding Allan Kaprow is perhaps attributed to his experiential artworks and analytical writings, which provide any researcher or scholar with the means to question the meaning behind the art. Current scholarship appears to examine Kaprow's relationship with philosophy and sociology, deconstructing the artist's work in order to find answers. Although previous literature has mentioned Kaprow alongside psychological material, Parkinson's essay is perhaps the most recent and relevant for this review. His essay relies upon extensive analysis, lacking a comprehensive theme between Kaprow and his relation with psychology. Kaprow's art has given scholars much to discuss, particularly its commentary on the dialectics of the social sciences (philosophy, sociology, psychology) and art. As art continues its transition away from the gallery, the dichotomy between public and private, personal and interpersonal space becomes an issue for art critics and artists alike.

## Chapter 2

### Games and Play:

#### Allan Kaprow's Interpersonal Relationships

Behavior which is related overtly, consciously, ethically, or symbolically to another human being (real, collective, or imagined) is interpersonal.<sup>16</sup>  
-Timothy Leary

To control what is outside one has to *do* things, not simply think or to wish, and *doing things takes time*. Playing is doing.<sup>17</sup>  
-D.W. Winnicott

An artist concerned with lifelike art is an artist who does and does not make art.  
-Allan Kaprow

Two people—call them A and B—approach the same door and simultaneously reach for the handle while exchanging courtesies. A decision has to be made. Who opens the door? Who goes first? How do they decide? Do they open the door together? Once in agreement, they concurrently pass through the door saying, “Excuse me.” Again, a compromise ensues. Who goes first? How do they decide? What is the appropriate etiquette? After stepping through the door frame, they collectively reach back and close the door, replaying courtesies. Who will close the door? Who will move on from the encounter? When is it appropriate to move on? The decision-making experimental anecdote is an activity from Allan Kaprow's *Maneuvers* (Naples Italy, 1976), an exaggerated arrangement of such competitive, often funny, exchanges between two individuals as they go through doorways (Figure 1).<sup>18</sup> Kaprow's Happenings in the sixties were an attempt to extend art into life, reframing the artist/spectator binary. The audience,

---

<sup>16</sup> Timothy Leary, *Interpersonal Diagnosis of Personality*, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1957), 4.

<sup>17</sup> D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, (New York: Basic Book Publishers, 1971), 41.

<sup>18</sup> Giorgio Maffei, *Allan Kaprow: A Bibliography*, (Milano: Mouse Publishing, 2011), 91.

however, could not conceive of art without an object, nor follow Kaprow's instructions. In turn, the artist sought to phase out the audience altogether in order to achieve a more complete integration of his performances with the environment in which they were done.<sup>19</sup> The spectator was no longer a necessary component, perhaps due to their hesitant or overzealous participation, which affected the performances. In lieu of such inconsistency, Kaprow directed his art toward interpersonal events, which Michael Kirby termed *Activities* in the late sixties, where the action of the person himself becomes the object of his own attention. This work of art can only be seen by one person, and it can only be viewed from within.<sup>20</sup> Kaprow understood the introspective experience art provides the spectator. When staring at a Pollock, for example, periphery vision subsides, and the viewer immerses into the painting, following its movement and inevitably their own. Too many players affect the rules and intimacy of an activity, therefore, Kaprow sought to create *Activities* which gauge how people, no more than two or three, would interact when following a script.

*Activities* in the seventies, such as, *Maneuvers* (1976), *Comfort Zones* (1975), and *Warm-ups* (1975), reveal Kaprow's interest in the philosophies of human interactions and behaviors discussed by John Dewey, Erving Goffman, and Ray Birdwhistell. Though Kaprow alludes to possibly reading psychoanalytic literature,<sup>21</sup> he does not pursue the matter further. Alongside the ideologies proposed by Dewey, Goffman, and Birdwhistell, I suggest Kaprow's *Activities* are homologous with the psychoanalytic theory of Transactional Analysis—the method for studying the interaction between individuals. Berne and his contemporaries in the sixties and seventies examined the paradigm of life—analyzing social and personal control of individual space.

---

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Crary, "Allan Kaprow: 'Activities,'" *Arts Magazine*, Volume 51, 1976.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Kirby, *The Art of Time*, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1969), 155.

<sup>21</sup> See Robert Morgan interview with Allan Kaprow. *Journal of Contemporary Art*, Vol. 4.2, 59

Although Kaprow is elusive when discussing the influence of psychoanalytic literature on his work, this chapter will show the artist's contemporaneous artworks, which become introspective, meditative social interactions that integrate the temporal action of art with the experimental exercises conducted in social sciences.

Kaprow argues his work is 'nonart', and as such, is a performance practice that need not be justified as an artwork. Rather, he equates it to "basic research," relieving the artist of inspirational metaphors, such as creativity, that are tacitly associated with making art, and therefore theatre art.<sup>22</sup> As Kaprow reflects in his essay, "Nontheatrical Performance" (1976), "What is basic research at one moment becomes detail work or something trivial at another; and seeking what is worth researching at a particular moment is where the guesswork comes in."<sup>23</sup> Rather than dissociate basic research from life, Kaprow integrates the concept into art. Through interpersonal and intimate encounters, the artist viewed art as "non-art," supplanting there are "two types of performances by artists, a theatrical and non-theatrical one," or as he defines them; artistry and function. Deconstructing his work, Kaprow began to incorporate everyday life routines in his performances. Engrossed with the routine of brushing his teeth, Kaprow examined his movements, analyzing a task he has done hundreds and thousands of times before. Of this experience he says, "I began to pay attention to how much this act of brushing my teeth had become routinized, nonconscious behavior, compared with my first efforts to do it as a child."<sup>24</sup> In other words this routine was transformative, stimulating the introspective mind and body, further invoking open-ended questions, such as—"How am I holding the toothbrush?" "How hard am I squeezing the toothbrush?" "Should I see the dentist?" and so forth.

---

<sup>22</sup>Laura Cull, *Deleuze and Performance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>23</sup> Allan Kaprow, ed. Jeff Kelley, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 177.

<sup>24</sup> Allan Kaprow, "Art Which Can't Be Art," 1986.

The *Activities* monotonous actions evoke the participant's consciousness, permitting total fixation on the body's movements and gestures introspectively and extrospectively. Though participants were restricted to follow preset instructions, few other stipulations applied, as the *Activities* encouraged free association. The scripts, or activity books, are somewhat like music scores suggests Kaprow, "They aren't the actual event but are notations which one or more persons can carry out. So they shouldn't be considered documents of what actually happened."<sup>25</sup> The photographs propose a real *Activity* is taking place. Jeff Kelley, Kaprow's biographer, implies the photos were deliberately staged either before or after the associated performance and "played with a low-key comedic intent that acted as a kind of disclaimer of their documentary veracity."<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Kelley mentions the booklets were designed after the minimal images and texts that are clearly displayed inside the emergency cards found in the seat pocket of airplanes (Figure 2). Maintaining the same design with all booklets, the pulp-fiction style manuals eliminated "wasteful" information, using *mise en scène* styled photographs alongside elementary instructions. A brief introduction prefacing the experiment's rules and intentions fills the first page of the booklet. Corresponding with the images, the text consists of command like instructions in order to suggestively guide the *Activity* along. The *Activity* booklets' minimal characteristics are reminiscent of a how-to guidebook. Ranging in size—12 x 9 in, 11 x 8 in, 16 x 11 in—the monochromatic cover, usually black with white font—although earlier booklets were white with black font—announces the work's title, traversed either horizontally or vertically (Figures 3 & 4). Under the title, depending on Kaprow's intent is the artist's name and/or the location and date of the *Activity*. Inside the booklets, Kaprow's do-it-yourself pages juxtaposed text with image, simplifying and clarifying the *Activity's* intentions. The booklets were not

---

<sup>25</sup> Giorgio Maffei, *Allan Kaprow: A Bibliography*, (Milano: Mousee Publishing, 2011), end cover.

<sup>26</sup> Jeff Kelley, *Childsplay: The Art of Allan Kaprow*, (University of California Press, 2007), 7.

merely an object rather they instructed participants to reevaluate their self-consciousness, particularly when in the presence of others.

From the specialized object in the gallery to the real urban environment, art had, by the sixties and seventies, shifted toward the real body and mind. Caught within the crossfire, Kaprow restructured his art—swapping the object between people who functioned in units or crowds, for social relationships between individuals. By developing intimate and routinized *Activities*, it was a turn from the observation of large group movement to smaller and more interiorized studies.<sup>27</sup> The participants in *Maneuvers*, for example, were organized into couples of opposite sex, including Kaprow himself. Over a two-day period the couples proceeded to follow the “instructions” in the twelve page *Activity* booklet. Depending on their preference, they were encouraged to select fifteen doorways—public or private—in which to enact the script. As previously mentioned, couples repeatedly passed through doors—forward and backward—implementing their positional or cultural role in society (Figure 5). For example, the traditional male gesture of reaching for and holding a door for a woman can be met with either rebuke or knowing smiles.<sup>28</sup> The couples’ experiences were subjected to repetitious physical and oral communication. After the *Activity* ended, the participants came together with Kaprow to debrief and discuss their distinct and uncanny experiences—similar to a therapy session.

Two days after the experience, however, Kaprow learned the participants had a professional art background. For him, this meant the activity lacked self-consciousness, thus altering the authenticity of the experience. Of these participants Kaprow says, “Their prior investments of time, energy and values were called into some (serious) question by what they

---

<sup>27</sup> Crary, “Allan Kaprow: ‘Activities.’”

<sup>28</sup> Allan Kaprow *Maneuvers*, 1976.

did. [...] It would be interesting to compare the experience of a group of merchants, or a group of sociologists, doing the same *Activity*. The meanings construed, on human, professional, and philosophical levels, might be very different.”<sup>29</sup> Echoing artists Duchamp and Rauschenberg, Kaprow too understands the subtleties within lifelike art. Though his previous works (Assemblages, Happenings, and Environments) lacked environmental and social control, this permitted him to question whether the interactions were planned or impulsively acted upon. If participants from various disciplines and backgrounds engaged his *Activities*, his works might have been interpreted quite differently.

“*Activities* explored the ways in which relationships break down when conventional forms of social intercourse are analyzed through conscious enactment.”<sup>30</sup> *Comfort Zones* (Madrid, Spain, 1975) tests participants’ personal space, pushing territorial boundaries, which Kaprow ascribes toward the social sciences (Figure 6). The individual’s obligation to maintain spontaneous involvement in the conversation and the difficulty of doing so place him in a delicate position. His co-participants, who control their own actions so that he will not be forced from appropriate involvement, rescue him. But the moment he is rescued he will have to rescue someone else, and so his job as interactant is only complicated further.<sup>31</sup> The participants engage in operations that address the social behavior of eye contact and interactions, thus confronting spatial infractions. However, too much eye contact produces anxiety and can result in aggressive reactions.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Allan Kaprow, “Participation Performance,” *Artforum*, Volume 15, 1977.

<sup>30</sup> Kelley, *Childsplay: The Art of Allan Kaprow*, 192.

<sup>31</sup> Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 116.

<sup>32</sup> Allan Kaprow, *Comfort Zones*, 1975.

In *Comfort Zones*, eight distinct co-dependent *Activities* invoke intimate relations that are entrenched in personal feelings that are the means that may bring the couple together when they are physically apart, or repulse them when they are physically too close for comfort.<sup>33</sup> The various *Activities* in *Comfort Zones* require the participants to predict and provoke one another's insecurities. Dividing the physical and emotional space, three of the exercises explore extrasensory perception, anticipating the others move. In one of the sequences, for example, the participants—A and B—sit together around a desk and lamp, silently in a room. B turns the light off, only to later turn it back on. All the while, A anticipates this action, saying “now” when the thought or feeling is the strongest (Figure 7). The remaining *Activities* focus on eye contact and proxemics<sup>34</sup>, integrating social bubbles and examining individual space. In a private place, B runs toward A as the couple attempt to lock eyes. B swerves before colliding with A, repeating the activity until A says “now”—feeling that the eye contact is admissible—at which point B stops to maintain eye contact with A until one or the other looks away (Figure 8).

In discussing the preceding interaction, the 1976 performance by Marina Abramovic and Ulay, *Relations in Space* (1976), suggests the probable outcome of non-verbal communication—the collision of egos (Figure 9). Though the artists are intended to collide, *Relations in Space* illustrates the failed communication in Kaprow's *Comfort Zones*. Further exploring the participants' intimate space, *Comfort Zones* directs its attention toward everyday life experiences, such as when an object traverses our individual space. Examining behaviors became the premise in *Activities*, as a shift from broad works that focused on experiences began to acknowledge sociological behaviors and communications. In everyday interaction, intrusions and

---

<sup>33</sup> See *Comfort Zones Activity* booklet.

<sup>34</sup> Defined by anthropologist Edward T. Hall as the study of ways in which man gains knowledge of the content of other men's minds through judgments of behavior patterns associated with varying degrees of proximity to them. *The Hidden Dimension*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 1.

obtrusions may occur simultaneously and, along with the corrective response they call forth, may guide behavior closely.<sup>35</sup> Derived from his compulsion to understand social relations via verbal and non-verbal communicatory factors, Kaprow further delimits the art and life binary.

It is not difficult to trace the genealogy that links Kaprow's experiential works with the meditations on experience of philosopher John Dewey.<sup>36</sup> According to Dewey, the artwork "is not twice alike for different persons [and...] it changes with the same person at different times as he brings something different to a work."<sup>37</sup> Kaprow began to look less at art and more toward everyday events and life *Activities*, seeing these 'lifelike' performances as a way of 'living attentively', a kind of meditative practice that reveals everyday life's 'hidden features'.<sup>38</sup> The *Activity*, suggests James Hindman, is a deceptively simple exploration of limited social transactions performed by several small groups of two or three, under his supervision and with his direct involvement as another participant.<sup>39</sup>

The concept of social transactions in Kaprow's *Activities* are analogous with a specific type of sociological and psychological experiment that emerged in the sixties and seventies, as social scientists were examining the theory of Transactional Analysis and interpersonal communication, attempting to decipher the significance of verbal and non-verbal interaction. Psychiatrist Eric Berne and his understudy Thomas Harris changed the discourse of social interactions.<sup>40</sup> In *Games People Play*, Berne defines Transactional Analysis, suggesting:

---

<sup>35</sup> Erving Goffman, *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971), 52.

<sup>36</sup> Kaprow was a student of John Cage (New School for Social Research), who in turn studied under Dewey at Black Mountain College.

<sup>37</sup> John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, (New York: Capricorn books, 1934), 331.

<sup>38</sup> Cull, *Deleuze and Performance*, 119.

<sup>39</sup> Hindman, "Self-Performance."

<sup>40</sup> Transactional analysis examines the intercommunication between individuals. Berne's analysis relied on a transaction (fundamental unit of social intercourse) and a stroke (fundamental unit of social interaction).

<http://www.ericberne.com/transactional-analysis/>

The unit of social intercourse is a transaction. If two or more people encounter each other... sooner or later one of them will speak, or give some other indication of acknowledging the presence of the others. This is called the transactional stimulus. Another person will then say or do something which is in some way related to the stimulus, and that is called the transactional response.<sup>41</sup>

The same meaning is applied to both social intercourse and transactions, which are composed of various social engagements between two people. To further understand transactions, Berne analyzes two forms of engagement: pastimes and games. He defines pastime as an engagement in which the transactions are straightforward. Games on the other hand, are an ongoing series of complementary ulterior transactions progressing to a well-defined, predictable outcome. Games are differentiated from pastimes, rituals, and *Activities* by two characteristics: (1) their ulterior quality and (2) the payoff. Even though the context in pastimes and games are defined and differentiated vis-a-vis transactions, it is the latter which bears comparison with Kaprow's *Activities*. In order to clarify the dichotomy between the two characteristics associated with games, Berne suggests, "a game looks like a set of operations, a simple transaction or set of transactions undertaken for a specific stated purpose, but after the payoff it becomes apparent that these 'operations' were really *maneuvers*; not honest requests but moves in the game."<sup>42</sup> Berne's games are one of many examples where Kaprow finds influence through social intercourse, inventing fictitious scenes taken from everyday life operations and creating a performance which questions authenticity and the meaning of behavior. As in any game, the players become increasingly adept with practice. Wasteful moves are eliminated, and more and more purpose is condensed into each move.<sup>43</sup> The enduring routinization in *Activities* confronts

---

<sup>41</sup> Eric Berne, *the Games People Play*, (Vermont: The Book Press, 1964), 29.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 55.

the mimetic socio-psychological experiments performed by psychologists and other social scientists.

0 Berne is dedicated to the analysis of games, their pastimes, scripts, and meanings. The games referenced throughout *The Games People Play*, come from examples sent from patients and fellow psychologists who created operations and games for Berne's analysis. These games examine every day experiences—life games, sexual games, marital games, and party games—with the latter being the original stimulus—"Why Don't You-Yes, But." Reformulating transactional analysis for the masses, Harris clarifies the theory in his New York Times best seller, *I'm Ok, You're Ok*, though he slightly diverges from Berne. The sixties yield for anything "pop," and pop psychology was no exception. People took life into their hands, literally, reading how behavior constructs social interaction. For the everyday reader, Harris describes the structure of the game, "Why Don't You-Yes But." Any number of participants can play, unlike Kaprow's intimate *Activities*. The game is constructed as follows:

One player, who is "it", presents a problem. The others start to present solutions, each beginning with "Why Don't You." To each of these the one who is "it" objects with a "Yes, But." A good player can stand off the rest of the group indefinitely, until they all give up, whereupon "it" wins.<sup>44</sup>

Contrary to the end of Kaprow's *Activities*, where the participants reflect collectively about their experiences, once a game has ended, Berne constructs a psychological analysis, categorizing the results as scientific findings, rather than pure observations. Kaprow functions as what the sociologists would call a participant-observer—someone who is very much part of an activity and yet able to achieve the psychological distance necessary for discriminative analysis.<sup>45</sup> The

---

<sup>44</sup> Thomas A. Harris, *I'm Ok-You're Ok*, (New York: Avon Books, 1967), 149.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Kostelanetz, *On Innovative Art(ist)s: Recollections of an Expanded Field*, (North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 1992), 93.

subject and observed participants in Berne's experiments differ from the participants in *Activities*, whose dualistic roles function as subject *and* experimenter, observer *and* observed delineating the art and life border.

Unlike the game, which has logic and a definite end to be obtained, it was important for Kaprow that play (the condition of movement, change, alteration), could be used as an occasion to act together and not against each other. He saw play as an activity providing its participants with fun, pleasure, satisfaction and relaxation from the pressures of the goal-oriented game model of life.<sup>46</sup> The notion of play holds its lineage in philosophy, leading back to Plato's distinction between play and imitation. The mimetic relationship young animals and humans develop—movements, sounds, social recognition—are derived from parental development. In this experience, youth adapt and evolve, growing into their environment. On the other hand, they play without conscious intention, and their only evident reason is the pleasure it gives them.<sup>47</sup> For Kaprow, the provenance of play comes from Johan Huizinga's "valuable book" *Homo Ludens*, in which the philosopher define, as "An activity with no material interest and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner." Once the rules are imposed, play is destined to fail. Restricting an activity within a set of rules, temporal and spatial boundaries bookend the game. Disparate from games, the a priori of play is dependent on its ability to stick to the rules, maintaining the fluidity between play and seriousness. In "Man, Play, and Games," Roger Caillois responds to Huizinga's conception of play in h proposing a rubric with which to further understand games

---

<sup>46</sup>Katarzyna Zimna, *Time to Play: Action and Interaction in Contemporary Art*, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 85.

<sup>47</sup> Kaprow discusses his affinity with play in his essay, "Education of the Unartist, Part II." Allan Kaprow, *Essays on The Blurring of Art and Life*, 113.

and play.<sup>48</sup> According to Caillois, the game is ruined by the nihilist who denounces the rules as absurd and unconventional, who refuses to play because the game is meaningless.

Allan Kaprow's interest in the social sciences, particularly the writings and theories of the sociologist Erving Goffman and anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell, led the artist toward his own experimentations and observations. Goffman, known for his study of face-to-face interactions, examines the ultimate behavioral materials, such as glances, gestures, positioning's and verbal statements that people continuously feed into the situation, whether intended or not.<sup>49</sup> Cross-sectioned with psychotherapeutic transactional analysis, Kaprow observes these face-to-face interactions poised with a psychoanalytic caveat—asking the question, how does it make you feel? In order to discern what is being communicated, Kaprow refers to Birdwhistell's exploration into the precise meanings of body language and movement within specific social groups, functioning as a language that helps illustrate, clarify, intensify, regulate, and control the back-and-forth nature of conversation. In *Introduction to Kinesics*, Birdwhistell provides a detailed and analytical prognosis for social kinesics, dividing the body into eight major sections which further assess behavior as defined by specific gestures and actions—depending on a participant's reaction with said body parts. Birdwhistell used kinegraphs to annotate body language (Figure 10). Through this arbitrary classification system, Birdwhistell simplifies dialogue by incorporating easily identifiable notations for the participant to learn. Each phase of movement...reveals some feature of our inner life.<sup>50</sup> In his own assessment, Kaprow began to

---

<sup>48</sup> Agon, Alea, Mimicry and Ilinx. See: Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, (New York: Free of Glencoe, 1961).

<sup>49</sup> Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face-Behavior*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 1.

<sup>50</sup> Rudolf Laban, revised by Lisa Ullman, *The Master of Movement*, (1950, United Kingdom: Harper and Row House, 1988), 19.

observe and examine basic research, particularly the idea that minute and intimate gestures bear a higher significance than their opposition.

Through ‘non-art’ performances Kaprow deconstructed the scientific approach of social intercourse, acknowledging that participation is whole—it engages both our minds and bodies in actions that transform art into experience and aesthetics into meaning. Our experience as participants is one of meaningful transformation.<sup>51</sup> An operation’s development into a meaningful transformation relies on the participant’s use of their own mind and body, therefore creating chance experiences. The brevity of Kaprow’s instructions allow participants to envelop themselves *in the Activity*. The performance processes of *Activities* indicate how interconnected the internal elements of each piece are. Organizational procedures, roles, locales and behavioral models, action patterns, props, these elements are all carefully arranged to reinforce the forced concentration on simple parts of participants’ lives.<sup>52</sup>

Integrating the social intercourse of *Maneuvers* with the intimate relations in *Comfort Zones*, Kaprow’s *Warm-Ups* (Boston, MA, 1975) examines groups of trios, who were selected at random—coincidentally, all groups consisted of two males and one female (Figure 11). Even though the *Activity* adds a third participant, *Warm-ups* were constructed around two participants, while the third observed, becoming a spectator rather than a player. Kaprow writes in the *Activity*’s introduction that *Warm-Ups* are rehearsals for “definitive acts,” such as in sports, theatre, or as in everyday life—warming up to a new situation or person. The interactions are intimate and temporal. In one particular sequence, B and C press an ice cube between their foreheads. With the ice melting they repeatedly ask one another “Is it warm yet? —Until the

---

<sup>51</sup> Jeff Kelley and Allan Kaprow, *Essays On The Blurring of Art and Life*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), xviii.

<sup>52</sup> Hindman, “Self-Performance.”

other responds, “yes.” Although ice physically separates the participants, the intimate encounter provokes unavoidable eye contact and the anticipation of the depleting object (Figure 12).

In what can be suggested as the most erotic activity in the booklet, which includes all three participants interchangeably, C lies in a bed as A calls from another room, “Is it warm yet?” C responds, “Not yet,” and the interaction continues until C says, “yes,” at which point C gets out of bed (Figure 13). The two participants switch roles, as A lies in the warmth left behind by C. Again, in a metadialogue C asks, “Is it warm yet? —Repeating, until A answers yes . In another, yet similar activity, which also takes place in the bed, is the exchange now between B and C (Figure 14). While C lies on the bed, stomach side, B proceeds to lie on top of C. B continues to question, “Is it warm yet? —Waiting until C says “yes.” B then arises from C, feeling the warmth on C’s body, which slowly neutralizes to its prior state. C arises from the bed, feeling the bed’s warmth, which gradually cools. The warmth revealed by the objects—ice cube, bed, body—invoke a defiance within the temporality of the activity, suggesting the fleeting encounters in everyday interactions.

The question proposed in *Warm-Ups*, “Is it warm yet?” adopts a theoretical and philosophical meaning rather than a direct reference to the experience. The question remains vague, as objects manipulate responses and the *Activity’s* outcome. “Is what warm yet?” Is this a reference to the participant’s body temperatures, as previously addressed in the *Activity Body Thermal Units*? Perhaps the question acknowledges the temperature in the room or outside? Or, is it a reference between the physical and psychical interaction? The script’s temporality allows the participant to create his or her own unique and original experience. Upon conclusion, as with most *Activities*, the participants and Kaprow discuss their experiences in a group-therapy session—this is where Kaprow’s art ends, at least under his jurisdiction. If attempted and perhaps

produced on human professional and philosophical levels, his experiences may manipulate meaning. Kaprow substitutes the conventions of everyday life for those of art: “not only its materials, subjects, objects and occasions, but also its habits, assumptions, exchanges, ceremonies, routines, and jokes.”<sup>53</sup>

The *Activities* analyzed human behaviors through social operations. A social situation arises when two or more people find themselves in each other’s physical presence, thereby allowing mutual monitoring of one another; it ends when the next-to-last participant leaves.<sup>54</sup> The works’ duration mimics the everyday. The *Activities* are not confined within temporal or spatial boundaries rather they participate with life. Analogous to Berne’s games, Kaprow’s ‘non-art’ performances concluded due to the participant’s frustration and exhaustion, not because the experience ended. The intent of Kaprow’s social interactions were to create an art form that would be ‘as open and fluid as the shapes of our everyday experience’ but not simply imitating it.<sup>55</sup> In an artist statement from the 1950s, Kaprow structured his art into four levels which are the basis for his art,<sup>56</sup> demonstrating his art’s development within a sociological mindset, exploring the actions and events which occur in everyday life in order to find the meaning between various *Activities* in human interaction. Kaprow’s enactments were concrete, although in the most elusive way: they were composed of people’s experiences.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Kelley, *Childsplay: The Art of Allan Kaprow*, 7.

<sup>54</sup> Greg Smith, *Erving Goffman*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 36.

<sup>55</sup> Zimna, *Time to Play*, 81.

<sup>56</sup> In his artist statement, rewritten from a recorded interview, Kaprow asserts that his works are “conceived on, generally four levels. One is the direct “suchness” of every action, whether with others, or by themselves, with no more meaning than the sheer immediacy of what is going on. The second is that they are performed fantasies not exactly like life, though derived from it. The third is that they are an organized structure of events. And the fourth level, no less important, is their “meaning” in a symbolical or suggestive sense. Michael Kirby, *Happenings* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1966), 49.

<sup>57</sup> Kelley, *Childsplay: The Art of Allan Kaprow*, 2.

The various experiments and analyses conducted by psychologists and sociologists in the sixties affected Kaprow's logic. Contemporaneous to the structure of Berne's games, or Birdwhistell's annotated movements, Kaprow attempts to move beyond this theoretic. When persons engage in regulated dealings with each other, they come to employ social routines or practices, namely, patterned adaptations to the rules. These patterns of behavior—conformances, by-passing, secret deviations, excusable infractions—when associated with ground rules constitute social order,<sup>58</sup> however, ground rules are only one component in this system. Participants engage in a fictitious dialogue based on the substance in everyday life. Kaprow's participation does not alter the work, however, when the participants discuss their experience post-*Activity*, Kaprow—who was once the participant—now becomes the analyst—interested in the meaning of human behavior and social intercourse. The artist remains an initiator; he proposes a metaphor to be worked/played with, but the whole process occurs on the edges of subjective control and improvisation, representation and experience, the individual and the collective and so on.<sup>59</sup>

Allan Kaprow was interested in making lifeworks. The contents of everyday life are more than merely the subject matter of art; they are the meaning of life. Kaprow's *Activities* were examples of restructuring the dichotomy between art and the social sciences. Everything man does involves interaction with something else. Interaction lies at the hub of the universe of culture and everything grows from it.<sup>60</sup> This persistent interaction with ourselves and others, whether the connections are implicit or explicit, formulated Kaprow's art, particularly his analysis of everyday routines, such as brushing one's teeth, shaving, combing one's hair, etc.

---

<sup>58</sup> Erving Goffman, *Relations in Public*, X.

<sup>59</sup> Zimna, *Time to Play*, 84.

<sup>60</sup> Edward Hall, *The Silent Language*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1959) 62.

Kaprow wanted to know *how* the meaning within a structured and fictional social interaction developed and *how* participants would respond.

### Chapter 3

#### REFLECT: SELF-REFLEXIVE ART C.1970

The mirror is a surface at once pure and impure, almost material yet virtually unreal; it presents the ego with its own material presence, calling up its counterpart, its absence from this 'other' space.<sup>61</sup>

-Henri Lefebvre

Glass had a profound effect upon the development of the personality: indeed, it helped to alter the very concept of the self.<sup>62</sup>

-Lewis Mumford

The polemics surrounding the notion of aesthetic autonomy in the sixties and seventies often centered on models of social and individual space. As cultural and racial radicals dismissed themselves from the authoritarian rule, freedom of thought, speech and conscience were essentially critical ideas, designed to replace an obsolescent material and intellectual culture by a more productive and rational one.<sup>63</sup> Artists and social scientists considered these ideas in experimental and performative experiences. Performance artists replaced the object with the body enacting socio-psychological experiments in order to analyze introspective and extrospective relationships. Though this thesis primarily discusses Allan Kaprow's interest with interpersonal communication, this chapter will acknowledge two of his contemporaries, Dan Graham and Lygia Clark, whose work reflects their psychotherapeutic sessions. In addition, I

---

<sup>61</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1974), 185.

<sup>62</sup> Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and company, 1934), 128.

<sup>63</sup> Marcuse, 1.

will examine how mirrors are applicable within these works, functioning as an extension of the environment.

Artists' physical and metaphysical use of mirrors in the late sixties and through the seventies, is perhaps attributed to developmental psychoanalysts, such as Jacques Lacan's "mirror stage" theory. Using technological mirrors—telephones, audio and video recordings—artists examined the mind and body, or rather the *I/ego*, in the self-reflexive individual. Placing mirrors in the performative environment, artists used the apparatus to examine the psychical reflectivity in public and private space, attenuating the mind/body relationship. Correlating mirrors with art, I will suggest that Kaprow, Graham, and Clark used these objects in order to delineate the self-conscious interpersonal dialogue from the impersonal self.

## KAPROW

Looking into a mirror one cannot escape the kinetic mimicry reflected on its surface. Mirrors, according to Merleau-Ponty, are instruments of universal magic, converting things into spectacle, spectacle into things, myself into another, and another into myself. Artists, like Kaprow, Graham and Clark used the magical instrument to identify a self-reflexive component in these reflective, and synchronous surfaces. If a single motif runs through most of Kaprow's *Activities*, it is self-absorption, self-reflection. In some *Activities*, this self-concern is masked, hidden, and vaguely threatening.<sup>64</sup> Using playful, vaudevillian scripts, Kaprow analyzes tensions, which threaten interpersonal relations, such as the proximity one encounters in overcrowded environments—public transportation, market, museum, bank, etc. The structure in Kaprow's *Activities* is supported by durational arrangement for various actions that are often

---

<sup>64</sup> James T. Hindman, "Self-Performance: Allan Kaprow's *Activities*," *The Drama Review: TDR*, Vol. 23, No. 1, Autoperformance Issue, (March, 1979), 100.

keyed to significant props. The manipulation of props, especially those that mirror and extend the action—recorders, cameras, telephones, and even mirrors—is designed to further set off the participants' behavior from its seemingly natural context.<sup>65</sup>

Mimetic conformity stems from one's relationship with his environment, suggesting persons are part of the whole, as opposed to the whole itself. Challenging such methods results in ostracization and a misunderstanding of the massified environment. The anthropologist Edward T. Hall recognized this synchrony, suggesting that people in interactions either move together (in whole or in part) or they don't and in failing to do so are disruptive to others around them. Basically, people in interactions move together in a kind of dance. Being in sync is a form of communication.<sup>66</sup> Kaprow recognized this sequence, examining the fluidity between participants engaging in reflective conversations. *Rates of Exchange* (1975) and similar works—such as *Routine* (1973)—contain deliberately narcissistic actions and dialogue that encourage self-absorption: mirror gazing, self-description, modeling intimate actions for partner imitation.<sup>67</sup> Observing the kinetic and durational exchanges between two people, Kaprow illustrates three possibilities in *Rates of Exchange*, which took place at the Stefanotty Gallery, New York, March 22-23, 1975. The first activity—and the one prevalent for this essay—inspects self-reflexive qualities in one's face (Figure 15). Separately looking into a mirror in private, both participants—A and B—tape pre-scripted questions, directed toward the other:

(Speaking partner's name) is your hair dirty?  
“ do you have a weak chin?  
“ is your mouth generous.  
“ is your brow creased with care?  
“ do you see the glow in your eye?  
“ are your cheeks hot?

---

<sup>65</sup> Hindman, “*Self-Performance: Allan Kaprow's Activities*,” 99.

<sup>66</sup> Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture*, (New York: Anchor Press, 1976), 61.

<sup>67</sup> Hindman, 100.

“ is your nose pinched?  
“ is your neck attractive? <sup>68</sup>

The list of questions is repeated until the tape ends (typically an hour), after which the participants exchange tapes. Other than the voice and addressee, the questions and reflected image remain unchanged throughout the activity's duration. Analyzing one's face over the course of an hour, however, affects the experience, as perhaps now more than ever, the participant comes into an elevated state of self-recognition, seeing beneath the surface and questioning what is on the surface. How does someone identify whether or not they have a generous mouth, a weak chin or dirty hair?

The mirror reflects the surface. What we see in them depends on what we bring to them.<sup>69</sup> Narcissistically, one's response to Kaprow's inquiries reflects personality, feelings, and preference in personal-individual space. Once outside this space, however, an individual is coerced to consider individual distance and spatial relationships. The individual is so rigidly tied to his own self-enhancement that he fails to sense the inappropriateness of his behavior.<sup>70</sup> Robert Sommer claims, "individual distance is not an absolute figure but varies with the relationship between the individuals, the distance at which others in the situation are placed, and the bodily orientations of the individual's one to another."<sup>71</sup> Citing the everyday, Sommer analogizes the unavoidable subway during rush hour. In this social intercourse, personal space is breached, comfort zones overlap and fuse together, and the individual adjusts and readjusts to the changing environment. Though verbal communication and interactions with "strangers" may evoke fear in

---

<sup>68</sup> Allan Kaprow, *Rates of Exchange*, 1975.

<sup>69</sup> Miranda Anderson, *The book of the mirror: an interdisciplinary collection exploring the cultural history of the mirror*, (Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 4.

<sup>70</sup> Leary, 332.

<sup>71</sup> Robert Sommer, *Beyond Space*, 31.

some, a conversation between two people is imminent. The non-verbal communication that emanates either consciously or unconsciously from the body's sensorium creates its own internal dialogue. The elements that contribute to one's environment engage and enact the senses into a dialogue between the body and mind. When two (or more) persons are in relation, the behavior of each towards the other is mediated by the experience by each of the other, and the experience of each is mediated by the behavior of each.<sup>72</sup> Relief and anxiety vacillate between public and private space, in addition to physical and behavioral relations. These "double sensations," as Merleau-Ponty avers, become habitual when adhering to a redundant script. Dictating the transactional stimulus, time confines an individual into a limited bubble until the experience slowly comes to an abstruse ending. As indicative in Kaprow's *Activities*, these everyday experiences or routines are merely repetitious cycles—a reflection of the past, regulating the present.

Post-War psychological experimentation—between the 1950s-1970s—sought to understand how, in controlled environments, an authoritarian presence manipulated one's ethical and moral choices.<sup>73</sup> The results were shocking, stirring controversy among the public, which perhaps saw itself reflected in these proverbial actions. Subjects in the experiments felt victimized and powerless, lacking control of their preconditioned behaviors, thus adhering to the experimenter's rules. The rule of behavior common to all situations, according to Goffman, is the rule obliging participants to "fit in." How we "fit in," he suggests, is through our knowledge of social and cultural etiquette amalgamated with common sense. At the movies, theatre, or

---

<sup>72</sup> R.D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967), 10.

<sup>73</sup> Two controversial experiments, Stanley Milgram's *Obedience Experiments* (1963) and Phillip Zimbardo's *Stanford Prison Experiment* (1971), examine how individual's dealt with social control. Recently, both experiments have been made into major motion pictures, ("Experimenter" and the "Stanford Prison Experiment"). The ethics and morals these experiments questioned jarred the country.

museum, for example, the commonsensical etiquette and written rule is silence. After a few visits, however, actions are routinized, and the dim lights become the stimulus—reinforcing the once written rule.

In *Routine* (1973), held in Portland, Oregon, Kaprow examines how we “fit in,” revealing how the mechanics of self-perception are lodged in human relationships. The five varied *Activities* echo or reflect one’s gestures/words, “each of them alluding to the deadpan stylizations of vaudeville routines, and to routinized behavior in everyday life.”<sup>74</sup> Additionally, in the preface of the *Activity* booklet, Kaprow recognizes the significance of self-reflection, suggesting, “people generally devote themselves to mirroring who they are in others.” Elaborating this concept, *Activities* one and three require the couple to use mirrors in a setting of their choice, public or private. In the first activity, the couple stands at a distance (Figure 16). While one participant holds the mirror, the other signals to adjust the object until he sees his reflected image. Taking a few steps back, the participants repeat the activity until, as the script implies, “it’s no longer possible to see oneself.” The environment remains unchanged even though the reflection illusionistically doubles an individual’s space and his surroundings. Revealed in this spatial division is the narcissus (reflected individual), who gains independence from his other (reflection) due to his ability to sense his environment, rather than merely occupy it.

The third activity also begins at a distance, in a place of the participants choosing (Figure 17). Walking backwards toward one another, the couple navigates their way using a hand held pocket mirror until the other’s reflection is clear. While looking at one another in the reflection, the couple mimics the other’s eye movements until tired, repeating this process with the mouth. Gradually moving toward where they began the activity, gestures remain continuous until the

---

<sup>74</sup> Allan Kaprow, *Routine*, 1973.

movements are no longer identifiable. The duration in Kaprow's *Activities* decelerate kinetic gestures, emphasizing the unconscious and otherwise routine behaviors in everyday situations. Both artist and participant in intimate choice environments cognitively evaluate kinetic gestures, spatial relations, and mimicry.

### GRAHAM

Standing between a large, wall sized, mirror and a seated audience, Dan Graham breathlessly describes his kinesthetic movements and those of the spectators. *Performer/Audience/Mirror* (1977) is divided into four stages, each timed for five minutes—enough time for the artist to extensively examine the external movements and behavior within the environment (Figure 18). With his back to the mirror, Graham verbally examines his gestures and attitude, which he believes are signified by this behavior.<sup>75</sup> As the spectators observe the artist's self-diagnosis, the mirror reflects *their* reactions, movements and Graham's backside, transferring Graham's assessment onto themselves. Attentive to both the performer and their reflection, spectators realize the proposed caveat—they cannot clearly internalize opposing objects simultaneously. The mirror invokes the “other” (narcissus) in the room, which disappears when the attention shifts from performer to audience in Stage 2. While Graham remains facing the audience, he assesses their collective movements—“The audience is looking down...they're hiding in the back...It's the people in the center that are the focus of my attention.”<sup>76</sup> Within the audience there is no collective body image per se; but everybody builds his own body-image in contact with others.<sup>77</sup> The audience becomes the narcissus as Graham verbally reflect.

---

<sup>75</sup> Alexander Alberro and Dan Graham, *Two-Way Mirror Power*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999), 124.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Paul Schilder, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body: Studies in the Constructive Energies of the Psyche*. (New York, NY: International Universities, 1950), 273.

Now moving freely in Stage 3, Graham faces the mirror analyzing *his* movements, as the audience is able to instantaneously perceive itself as a public mass (as a unity) offsetting its definition by the performer's delayed discourse. Graham's proximity to the mirror does not allow the audience to see his gestures, instead they see backside, listening to the supposed gestures. Still facing the mirror, Graham describes the audience's collective inverse actions. The slight delay and fluid commentary, particularly in Stages 2 and 4, overlaps/undercuts the present mirror view an audience member has of himself or herself and of the collective audience, which may influence his or her further interpretation of what he or she sees.<sup>78</sup> Included in many of Graham's performances, as well as architectural projects/pavilions, the mirror optically responds to a human observer's movements, varying as a function of his position. The apparatus also piqued Graham's interest in two-way mirrors and time delay video, which manipulate one's environment using reflective and semi-transparent surfaces that emphasize a space's heterogeneity.

Questioning the relation of space, Graham's work is a derivative of the social sciences and European phenomenologists, such as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. This becomes explicitly clear during the sixties and seventies as Graham incorporates relational experiences as a means to distinguish the perception of reality as perceived by the mind/body dichotomy. Whether or not Graham consciously acknowledges these philosophies in his work, *Performer/Audience/Mirror* is homogenous with the conversation artists and philosophers were having at the time. Michel Foucault's examination of social space suggests we do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another.<sup>79</sup> The spaces

---

<sup>78</sup> Alberro and Graham, 125.

<sup>79</sup> Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowicz, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1967, 23.

which we live are the mirror between the real and unreal, or as Foucault articulates, the utopia and heterotopia. The mirror is utopian in that it is a placeless place, an unreal virtual space that opens up behind the surface.

The self-reflective works by Kaprow and Graham subject participants to enter a virtual and ethereal space by limiting personal space. The mirror, suggests Foucault, is also heterotopian because it reflects one's present reality. It makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.<sup>80</sup> Looking into a mirror, the unreal virtual space becomes real when the observer allows himself to trace a line back into their physical reality, such as Kaprow's participants in *Routine*. Once this bridge is formed, between observer-mirror/mirror-observer, this dialectic becomes part of one's environment, which in the widest sense, must be interpreted as the particular meeting-ground of the physical and psychological factors which govern our universe.<sup>81</sup>

Humans are tied to each other by hierarchies of rhythms that are culture-specific and expressed through language and body movements.<sup>82</sup> The rhythm of our culture is dependent on the clock, specifically the nine-to-five paradigm. The patterns associated with everyday life are embedded into our consciousness, rather, preconditioned, as illustrated by Lacan's "mirror-stage," in which the child recognizes himself as a separate object by means of his mirrored image.<sup>83</sup> Once this recognition is ascertained, the child discovers his identity, thus applying the *I*

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>81</sup> Popper, 7.

<sup>82</sup> Hall, *Beyond Cultures*, 64.

<sup>83</sup> Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America," *October*, Vol. 3, 1977, 52. In her analysis of Vito Acconci's *Airtime*, Krauss refers to Lacan suggesting the artist constructs a narcissistic relationship with himself in a mirror in a means to discover his identity.

or *ego* to socially elaborated situations. Within these everyday interactions, intrusions and obtrusions may occur simultaneously and, along with the corrective response they call forth, may guide behavior closely.<sup>84</sup> Graham recognizes this interaction synchrony that occurs in interpersonal situations by exploring the self-reflexive feedback loops between our behavioral experiences. At the height of the Vietnam War and at a critical moment in the sexual revolution, when assertions of both eroticism and irony within the context of art had deep personal and political meaning,<sup>85</sup> Graham's hypnotic *Lax/Relax* (1969) rhythmically provokes self-reflection for the artist and participant.

A pre-recorded tape plays in the background. Graham stands on a stage and faces an audience. The tape begins to play and a female voice soothingly says, "Lax," followed by a deep meditative breath—in and out. The female voice repeats this action, however, this time Graham syncopates with her, saying the word, "Relax," followed by a deep breath as well. For the next thirty minutes—the tapes duration—this is the pattern which creates a hypnotic ebb and flow. Using a tape-recording rather than physical presence, Graham is able to instill a rhythm within him, anticipating the next breath, the next word. Through absorption, says Graham, the girl's recorded voice and my voice are tending in vocal intonation and in my body's posture to "identify" with our particular phrase.<sup>86</sup> The words "Lax"/"Relax" oscillate between deep meditative breaths, one of the key techniques of Reichian therapy, which Graham was undergoing at the time. As the feedback loop continues, the breathing that was short and shallow becomes drawn out over the work's duration. Deep breaths derail the performance, intervening the pure metronomic rhythm of the words. The recorded voice phases out, breaking Graham's

---

<sup>84</sup> Erving Goffman, *Relations in Public*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 52.

<sup>85</sup> Simpson and Iles, 59.

<sup>86</sup> Alberro and Graham, 121.

routine as the artist now falls into a trance himself. Though they are non-participants per se, the audience is enmeshed in the performance, situated between Graham and the “other” (narcissus). The paradox here is that, despite our will and ability to experience other’s behaviors, we are self-absorbed within our environment.

## CLARK

Prior to her voluntary exile in 1967, the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark examined multisensorial and psychological atmosphere through her artistic experiments. As a member of the artistic and anti-authoritarian movements, *Neo-concretism* and *Tropicália*, Clark analyzed the effect of interpersonal space on the mind and body. Similar to Kaprow and Graham, Clark’s interest in the socio-psychological drove her work. Relying on the viewer, and vice versa, she undermined the clear-cut separation between observing subject and observed object.<sup>87</sup> Like many of her contemporaries, Clark was concerned with understanding the self and how the communication system is dispersed through all the sensory modalities.

Captivated by the borderless unpredictability of the Möbius strip, Clark demarcated the boundaries between singularity and plurality, public and private, and experiment and art. Merging interactivity with dialogue, Clark acknowledges the interpersonal relationship between the physical and psychological, or body and mind. In *Caminhando* (Trailings or Walking, 1963/64) participants are invited to make a Möbius strip by taking the band of paper from around a book, cutting it open, twisting the paper, and then gluing the band back together (Figure 19). Next, with a pair of scissors, a continuous cut is made until, as Clark instructs, “you have gone the circuit of the strip, and then it’s up to you whether to cut to the left or the right. This idea of choice is capital. The special meaning of this experience is the act of doing it.”<sup>88</sup> By creating and

---

<sup>87</sup> Monica Amor, “Lygia Clark,” 3.

<sup>88</sup> Yves-Alain Bois and Lygia Clark, “Nostalgia of the Body,” MIT Press, 1994, *October*, Vol. 69, 99.

cutting the external object, the participant becomes self-aware of their physical experience, carefully staying within the parameters of the activity. *Caminhando* is an extension of the human psyche, as the choice of going “left” or “right” and its conclusive state affects an individual’s psychical process. What one must insist upon is that objectively observable behavior finds expression within the individual, not in the sense of being in another world, a subjective world, but in the sense of being within his organism.<sup>89</sup>

*House of the body* (1968) is a variety of works which examine specific sensorial attributes, using masks, goggles, mirrors and fabric to impregnate the senses through depriving certain senses, while enacting others. Where Clark’s previous works were meant to be manipulated—held, pressed, stretched—in an intimate experience that engages the subject’s senses, prompting an awareness of his or her own body,<sup>90</sup> her new works were intended to be worn on the body. The homemade apparatuses engage the participant into an internal dialogue. In *Máscara Sensoriais* (Sensorial Masks, 1967), participants wear cloth masks/hoods that incorporate eyepieces (mirrors, kaleidoscope), ear coverings, and a nosebag filled with herbs (Figure 20). In Clark’s words, “The participant, on wearing the mask, experiences new sensations which go from integration within the world around him to interiorization within complete isolation.” Clark attempts to psychologically reprogram the participant’s environment and psyche by stimulating the senses. Few of the masks use small ocular mirrors that hang a few inches in front of the eyes, altering one’s individual and social space. Perceiving the space beyond the mirror is inevitable without feeling “watched” or self-conscious, as to see oneself in a mirror, to identity oneself, requires a mental operation by which the subject is capable of

---

<sup>89</sup>George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, Society*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934, 2015), 5.

<sup>90</sup>Ana Maria Leon, *Lygia Clark: Between Spectator and Participant*, 47-48.

objectivizing himself of separating what is outside from what is inside.<sup>91</sup> The omnipresent eye pulses between the external and internal space. The participant cannot separate himself from the environment; rather he experiences new sensations which go from integration within the world around him to interiorization within complete isolation.<sup>92</sup> Similarly, in *Mask with Mirrors* (1967), the mask, which appears to be an optometrist's apparatus, examines optical sensations using a reconstructed pair of ski goggles with four ocular mirrors attached—two above and below each eye (Figure 21).<sup>93</sup> The mirrors create an inescapable self-reflexive environment for the participant who vacillates between introspection and extrospection. By focusing on the self, introspection becomes a refusal to engage with difference and the messy complications of reality.<sup>94</sup> While the mirrors delimit the viewer's perception of the whole environment, Clark creates an introspective microspace—reflecting the other (narcissus).

In addition to examining an individual's environment, Clark experimented with individual and interpersonal space. In *Diálogo de Óculos* (Dialogue of Goggles, 1967) couples wear goggles adjoined with a flexible hinge, controlling the individual distance between participants (Figure 22). Eliminating the peripheral and surrounding space, Clark creates an uncomfortable, yet, inevitable activity—eye contact. Comparable with Kaprow's *Comfort Zones* or Graham's *Performer/Audience/Mirror*, the participant's attempt to avoid the "other" becomes an inescapable parable. This "other" of the mirror, endowed with a fleeting life, is a volatile and capricious reflection. Sometimes it seems ready to melt into the original, for lack of sufficient distance; at other times it appears dangerously liberated from its source, endowed with a

---

<sup>91</sup> Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 5.

<sup>92</sup> Lygia Clark, "Sensorial Masks," 1967 in Fundacio Antoni Tapies, Lygia Clark, 221

<sup>93</sup> Simone Osthoff posits the similarity between Clark's *Mask with Mirrors* and Ivan Sutherland's head mounted, virtual reality display in 1968.

<sup>94</sup> Ana Maria Leon, 48.

troubling strangeness.<sup>95</sup> Perhaps in *Diálogo de Óculos*, Clark elicits the gaze from the casual passerby, a playful stare down, or rather a more intimate connection between mother and child. These encounters reveal the potential disappearance of the subject, and as Lacan's mirror stage suggests, the ego.

Clark continues her interpersonal conversations in another dialogue— (*Diálogo de Maos*, Dialogue of hands, 1966) (Figure 23). Binding their right hands together with an elastic band, Clark and her partner—Hèlio Oticica—engage in a submissive and sensual non-verbal conversation. *Diálogo de Maos* examines the restricted choices prevalent in the everyday, generating a fight or flight response which challenges the internal anxiety of seeing oneself through another's experience. Within the restricted spatial boundaries the artists' hands twist and conform, like the Möbius strip. Engaging and disengaging, the mimicry of their hands evokes an intimate conditioned relationship. Clark continued to address the socio-psychological experimentations, perhaps more so, after her voluntarily exile to Paris. Delving deeper into her own psychotherapeutic sessions, Clark's art transitioned from the communicative toward the meditative and introspective, where she reversed the patient/therapist role.

The socio-psychological works by Kaprow, Graham and Clark emphasize self-consciousness within the "other." To discover this "other," Kaprow examines the effect of routines in interpersonal relationships, questioning daily habits which are typically overlooked. Manipulating one's perception in space and time, Graham arouses the cerebral by extending one's environment. Using a mirror, the artist creates an illusionistic image, amplifying the space and expelling the psychical. Emphasizing the preconditioned experiences in public and private space, the delayed feedback in Graham's work—analogueous with Kaprow—redefines the action.

---

<sup>95</sup> Melchoir-Bonnet, 184.

Unlike Kaprow, both Graham and Clark merged their personal psychotherapy experiences with their art. While Graham kept an open dialogue between the artist-therapist-patient relationship, Clark, particularly in the 1970s, became the therapist, conducting private sessions using “relational objects.” As with all therapy sessions, however, the patient reintegrates with society until the next session, which mirrors the last.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion

Artists in the sixties and seventies were demarcating themselves from the traditional artistic milieu. Allan Kaprow, Dan Graham, and Lygia Clark played therapist; manipulating an individual's space while demonstrating the significance of self-absorption and self-reflection. Not bound by limitations, rules and traditions, the aforementioned artists enacted the senses and consciousness of the participants in order to invoke a total participatory experience. What they propose to the spectator is the result of their own existential commitment, however, and to this extent elements from outside life are included in the artistic statement.<sup>96</sup> Entrusting himself to the artist, the participant engages with the activity as with everyday actions. The range of choice open to the individual is not the decisive factor in determining the degree of human freedom, but *what* can be chosen and what *the individual chooses*.<sup>97</sup>

At the beginning of art we find the behavior adopted by the artist that set of moods and acts whereby the work acquires its relevance in the present. The transparency of the artwork comes from the fact that the gestures forming and informing it are freely chosen and are part of its subject.<sup>98</sup> Prevalent in interpersonal art is the notion of choice within space and time. Though Kaprow was an avid writer in which he expressed his affinity for philosophical enquiries, he seldom cites influences. While recent scholarship discusses Kaprow's art under a contemporary scope, most of these inferences are speculative. In her discussion of Bourriaud's relational aesthetics, Rodenbeck suggests the critic's missed attempt to corroborate interpersonal art in the

---

<sup>96</sup> Frank Popper, *Art, Action and Participation*, (London: Studio Vista, 1975), 183.

<sup>97</sup> Marcuse, 7.

<sup>98</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon: Leses Du Réel, 2002.

sixties and seventies within the contemporary milieu. Scholars also attribute other contemporary aspects to Kaprow's art, such as the immanence his *Activities* evoke particularly when compared with performance. Current scholarship reveals the dualism in Kaprow's art as the artist pendulates between art/life, mind/body, participant/observer, and subject/experimenter.

When observing traditional art, Michael Kirby suggests art "exists in our personal experience of the work."<sup>99</sup> The same object connotes diverse feelings and experiences for each spectator. From this one-dimensional angle is where, as Kirby implies, the new art forms; within. Kaprow's art in the seventies literalized Kirby's definition, *Activities*, as his interpersonal pieces evoked the spectator into an internal dialogue. The *Activities* were a play of vaudevillian and slapstick comedies, twinned with everyday life. Questioning gestures, routines, and time, *Activities* mirrored the object creating an introspective experience which now becomes analyzed. Kaprow's quasi-experimental 'non-art' works examine the boundary between art and life, emulating social transactions which are a means to an end. The body takes a new form when artists, like Kaprow, Graham, and Clark, use reflective and looping props extending the psychical and physical space.

The mirror has played a defining role in art and life, though this thesis acknowledges only three artists. Various artists in the sixties and seventies were using mirrors in/out of the museum gallery space. The figural silkscreen mirrors by Michelangelo Pistoletto transform the museum goer's perspective. Hanging vertically (common to paintings and mirrors) the distorted works manipulate the spectator's self-awareness. Robert Morris' *Mirrored Cubes* (1965) and Robert Smithson's *Yucatan Mirror Displacements* (1969) illustrate the vast propensity in which these

---

<sup>99</sup> Kirby. 155.

props are utilized by using the mirrors to extend the environments. Though these artists reconfigured the external environment, Kaprow, Graham and Clark reprogram the self-conscious through their anti-therapeutic work.

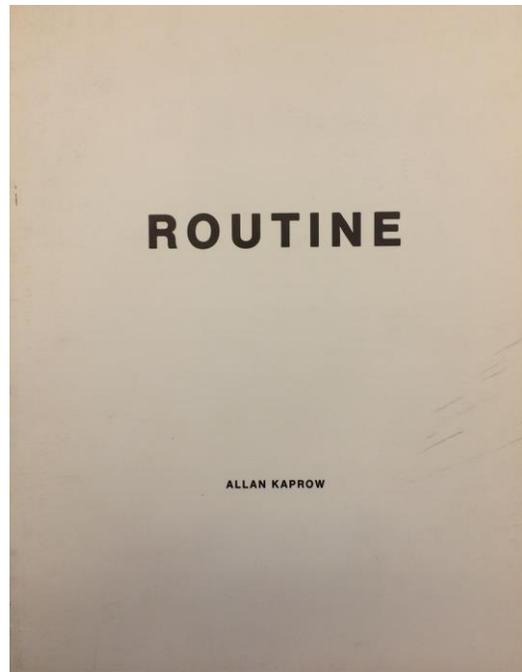
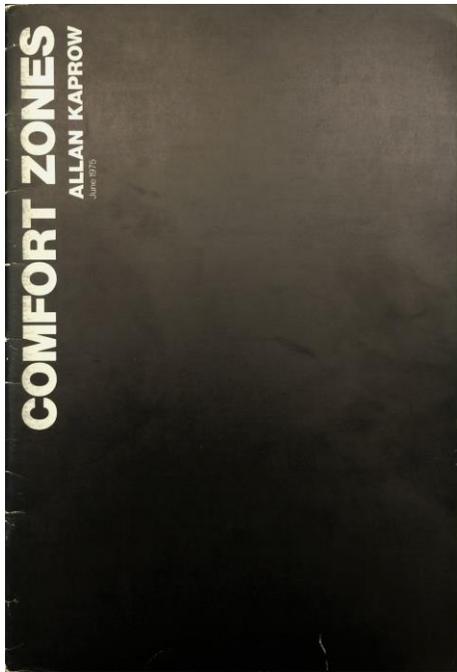
# Figures



Figure 1. Allan Kaprow, *Maneuvers*, 1976, photo by Bee Ottinger. Getty Research Center.



Aircraft Safety Card



Figures 3 & 4, Example of black (L) and white (R) covers. Getty Research Center.

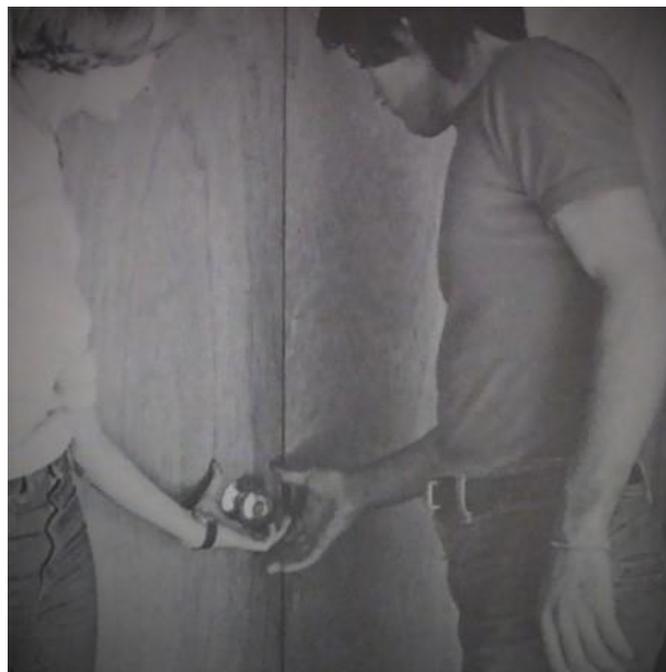


Figure 5, Allan Kaprow, *Maneuvers*, 1976, photo by Bee Ottinger. Getty Research Center.



Figure 6. Allan Kaprow, *Comfort-Zones*, 1975. Getty Research Center.



Figure 7. Allan Kaprow, *Comfort Zones*, 1975. Getty Research Center.



Figure 8. Allan Kaprow, *Comfort-Zones*, 1975. Getty Research Center.

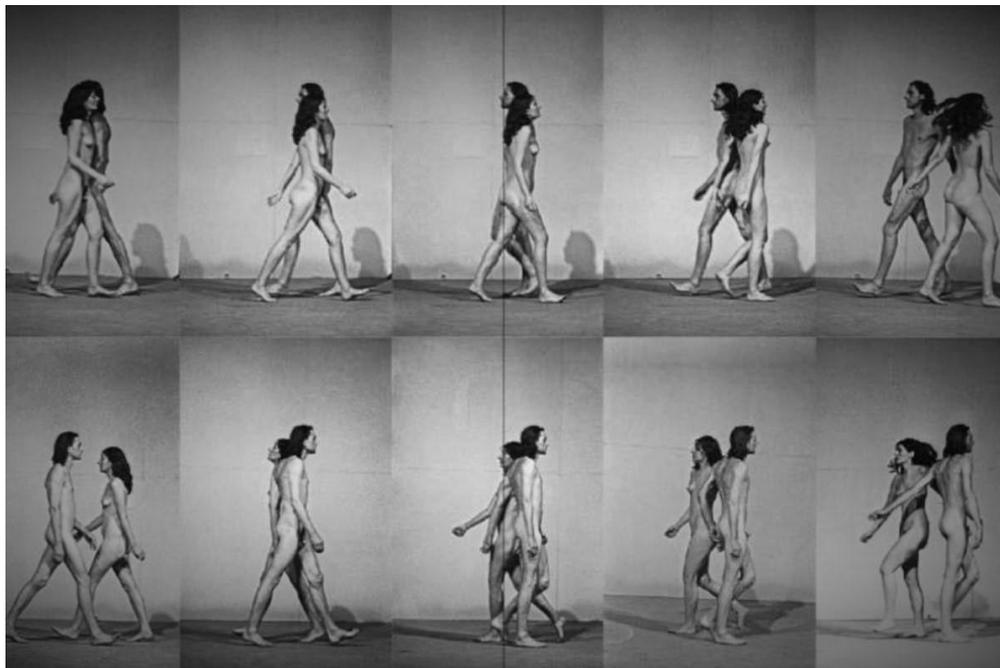


Figure 9. Marina Abramovic and Ulay, *Relation in Space*, 1976.

— ○ —	Blank-faced	☞ ☞	Slitted eyes
— ^	Single raised brow (^ indicates brow raised)	☉ ☉	Eyes upward
— ∩	Lowered brow	— ☉ ☉ —	Shifty eyes
∨	Medial brow contraction	☹ ☹	Glare
•••••	Medial brow nods	☺	Tongue in cheek
— ^ —	Raised brows	☶	Pout
○ ○	Wide eyed	☰	Clenched teeth
— ○	Wink	☺	Toothy smile
☉ ☉	Sidewise look	☰	Square smile
☞ ☞	Focus on auditor	☉	Open mouth
• •	Stare	☺	Slow lick—lips
☹ ☹	Rolled eyes	☺	Quick lick—lips
		☺	Moistening lips
		☺	Lip biting

Figure 10. Ray Birdwhistell, *Kinegraph* sample, nd.



Figure 11. Allan Kaprow, *Warm-Ups*, 1975, photo by Bee Ottinger. Getty Research Center.



Figure 12. Allan Kaprow, *Warm-Ups*, 1975, photo by Bee Ottinger. Getty Research Center.



Figure 13. Allan Kaprow, *Warm-Ups*, 1975, photo by Bee Ottinger. Getty Research Center.



Figure 14. Allan Kaprow, *Warm-Ups*, 1975, photo by Bee Ottinger. Getty Research Center.



Figure 15. Allan Kaprow, *Rates of Exchange*, 1975, photo by Bee Ottinger. Getty Research Center.

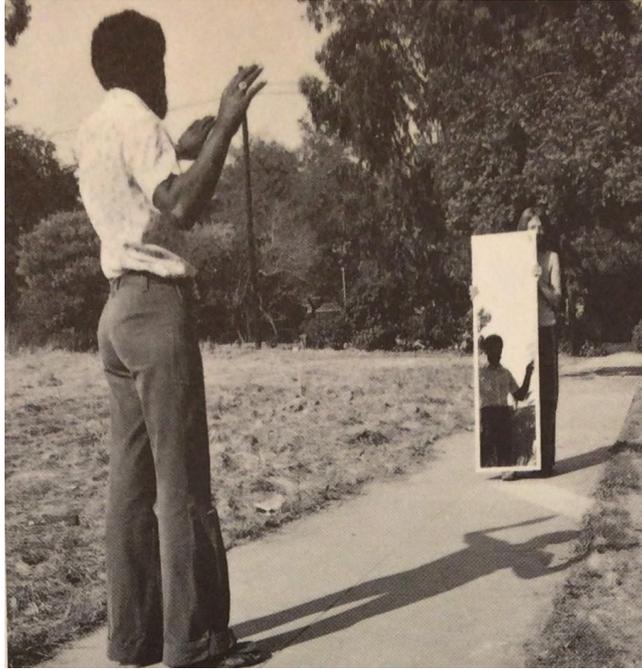


Figure 16. Allan Kaprow, *Routine*, 1975, photo by Alvin Comiter. Getty Research Center.

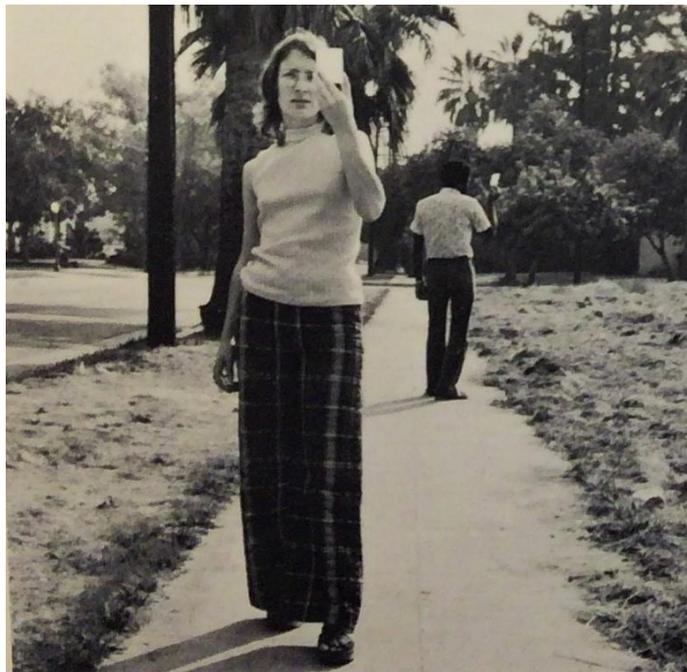


Figure 17. Allan Kaprow, *Routine*, 1975, photo by Alvin Comiter. Getty Research Center.



Figure 18. Dan Graham, *Audience/Performer/Mirror*, 1977.

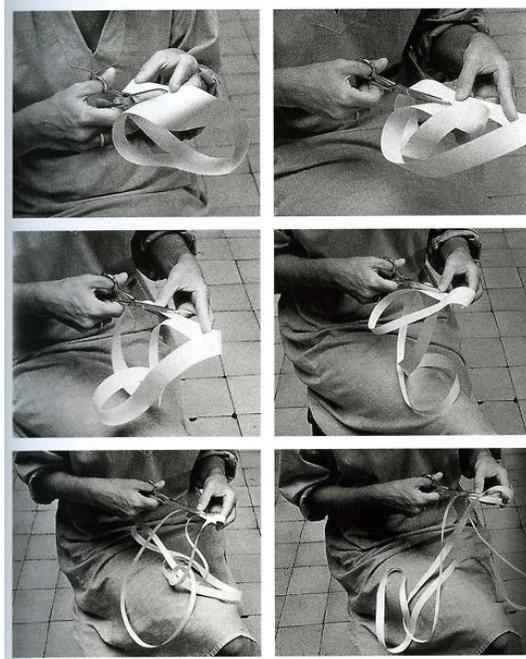


Figure 19. Lygia Clark, *Caminhando (Walking)*, 1964.



Figure 20. Lygia Clark, *Máscaras Sensoriais* (Sensorial Masks), 1967.



Figure 21. Lygia Clark, *Mask with Mirrors*, 1967.



Figure 22. Lygia Clark, *Diálogo de Óculos* (Dialogue of Goggles), 1967.



Figure 23. Lygia Clark, *Diálogo de Mãos* (Dialogue of Hands), 1967.

## Bibliography

- Amor, Monica. "From Work to Frame, In Between, and Beyond: Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, 1959–1964." *Grey Room* 38 (2010): 20-37.
- Arnheim, Rudolf. *Visual Thinking*. Berkeley: U of California, 1969.
- . *New Essays on the Psychology of Art*. Berkeley: U of California, 1986.
- Arendt, Hanna, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: U of Chicago, 1958.
- Bateson, Gregory. *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*. New York: Dutton, 1979.
- Bergson, Henri, and Mabelle Louise Cunningham Andison. *The Creative Mind*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1946.
- Berne, Eric. *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy: A Systematic Individual and Social Psychiatry*. New York: Grove, 1961.
- . *Games People Play: The Psychology of Human Relationships*. New York: Grove, 1964.
- Birdwhistell, Ray L. *Introduction to Kinesics: An Annotation System for Analysis of Body Motion and Gesture*. Louisville, KY: U of Louisville, 1952.
- Birdwhistell, Ray L. *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1970.
- Bishop, Claire. *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London: Verso, 2012.
- Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon: Leses Du Réel, 2002.
- Buchloh, B. H. D., Judith F. Rodenbeck, and Robert E. Haywood. *Experiments in the Everyday: Allan Kaprow and Robert Watts, Events, Objects, Documents*. New York: Columbia U, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, 1999.
- Butler, Cornelia H., Luis Pérez Oramas, Antonio Sergio Bessa, and Lygia Clark. *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art, 1948-1988*.
- Caillois, Roger. *Man, Play, and Games*. New York: Free of Glencoe, 1961.
- Carpenter, Edmund, and Marshall McLuhan. *Explorations in Communication, an Anthology*. Boston: Beacon, 1960.
- Clark, Lygia, and Yve-Alain Bois. "Nostalgia of the Body." *October* 69 (1994): 85.
- Cull, Laura. *Deleuze and Performance*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009.
- . "Attention Thinking Immanence and ontological participation in Kaprow, Deleuze and Bergson." *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 2011.

- . "Performance as Philosophy: Responding to the Problem of 'Application.'" *Theatre Research International* Vol. 37, Issue 1 (March 2012) 20-27.
- Crary, Jonathan. "Allan Kaprow's *Activities*." *Arts Magazine* 1 Jan. 1976: 78-81., 2012.
- Foucault, Michel, and Jay Miskowiec. "Of Other Spaces." *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986): 22.
- Glimcher, Mildred, and Robert R. McElroy. *Happenings: New York, 1958-1963*. New York: Monacelli
- Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959.
- . *Interaction Ritual; Essays in Face-to-face Behavior*. Chicago: Aldine Pub., 1967.
- . *Relations in Public; Microstudies of the Public Order*. New York: Basic, 1971.
- Graham, Dan. *Dan Graham: Public/private*. Philadelphia, PA: Goldie Paley Gallery, Levy Gallery for the Arts in Philadelphia, Moore College of Art and Design, 1993.
- Graham, Dan, and Alexander Alberro. *Two-way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999.
- Graham, Dan, Bennett Simpson, Chrissie Iles, Rhea Anastas, Kim Gordon, Rodney Graham, and Nicolás Guagnini. *Dan Graham: Beyond*. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009.
- Groddeck, Georg. *The Book of the It*. New York: International Universities, 1976.
- Hall, Edward T. *The Silent Language*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959.
- . *The Hidden Dimension*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966.
- Harris, Thomas A. *I'm OK, You're OK: A Practical Guide to Transactional Analysis*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
- Henri, Adrian. *Total Art: Environments, Happenings, and Performance*. New York: Praeger, 1974.
- Hindman, James T. "Self-Performance: Allan Kaprow's *Activities*." *The Drama Review* 23.1 (1979): 95-102.
- Kaprow, Allan, and Jean Lebel. *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1966.
- Kaprow, Allan. "Non-Theatrical Performance." *Artforum* 14: (1976) 45.
- . "Participation Performance." *Artforum* 15 (1977): 24.
- Kaprow, Allan, and Jeff Kelley. *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Kaprow, Allan, and Eva Hermann. *Allan Kaprow: 18/6: 18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, November 9/10/11 2006. Göttingen: Steidl, 2007.
- . *Allan Kaprow: Art as Life*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008.

Kaprow, Allan, and Giorgio Maffei. *Allan Kaprow: A Bibliography*. Milano: Mousse Pub., 2011.

Kelley, Jeff, and Allan Kaprow. *Childsplay: The Art of Allan Kaprow*. Berkeley: U of California, 2004.

Kirby, Michael, and Jim Dine. *Happenings*. New York: Dutton, 1965.

Kostelanetz, Richard. *The Theatre of Mixed Means; an Introduction to Happenings, Kinetic Environments, and Other Mixed-means Performances*. New York: Dial, 1968.

———. *On Innovative Art(ist)s: Recollections of an Expanding Field*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992.

Krauss, Rosalind. "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America. Part 2." *October* 4 (1977): 58

Laing, R. D. *The Divided Self*. New York: Pantheon, 1969.

Leary, Timothy. *Interpersonal Diagnosis of Personality; a Functional Theory and Methodology for Personality Evaluation*. New York: Ronald, 1957.

Marcuse, Herbert. *One-dimensional Man; Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Boston: Beacon, 1964.

Mead, George Herbert, and Charles W. Morris. *Mind, Self & Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago, 1934.

Melchoir-Bonnet, Sabine. *The Mirror: A History*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Structure of Behavior*. Boston: Beacon, 1963.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. New York: The Humanities Press. 1962.

Nisbet, James. *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems in Art of the 1960s and 1970s*. MIT, 2014.

Osthoff, Simone. "Lygia Clark and Helio Oiticica: A Legacy of Interactivity and Participation for a Telematic Future." *Leonardo* 30.4 (1997): 279.

Parkinson, Nick. "Speaking Directly: An Examination of Symbol and Communication in Kaprow's Happenings." *Art Criticism* Vol 25 No. 1 and 2 (2010): 58-72.

Rodenbeck, Judith F. *Radical Prototypes: Allan Kaprow and the Invention of Happenings*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2011.

Rivera, Tania. "Ethics, Psychoanalysis and Postmodern Art in Brazil." *Third Text* 26.1 (2012): 53-63.

Sandstone, Jessica. "Teaching Intermedia: Body, Community, Site." *Anti-Academy*.

Schilder, Paul. *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body: Studies in the Constructive Energies of the Psyche*. New York, NY: International Universities, 1950.

Smith, Gregory W. H. *Erving Goffman*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006.

Sneed, Gillian. "From Happenings to Conversations: Allan Kaprow's Legacy in Contemporary "Relational" Art Practices." *Art Criticism* Vol.25, No. 1&2 (2010) 73-89.

- Solomon, Arthur, and Steven Perry. *Interpersonal Communication: A Cross-disciplinary Approach*.  
Springfield, Ill.: C.C. Thomas, 1970.
- Sommer, Robert. *Personal Space; the Behavioral Basis of Design*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall,  
1969.
- Turner, Fred. *The Democratic Surround: Multimedia & American Liberalism from World War II to the  
Psychedelic Sixties*.
- Turner, Fred. *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the  
Rise of Digital Utopianism*
- Zimna, Katarzyna. *Time to Play: Action and Interaction in Contemporary Art*. 2015.



