

VIS 2: Introduction to Art-Making: Motion and Time Based Work

Lecture - Tuesdays 6:30 – 8:20 pm, Warren Lecture Hall

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Assignment 2:

Write three scores for open works. Perform two scores, one of your own and one from a classmate chosen at random.

You'll keep one score for yourself and turn the other two in for the score grab bag. Then you'll choose two scores from the grab bag and select one to perform in addition to your own score. If you pull your own score throw it back.

This assignment is based on the concept of indeterminacy - a technique developed by John Cage and others in which compositional elements are determined by chance or left to the discretion of the performer. Works that are indeterminate are sometimes also referred to as "open works."

For our purposes, a score is a set of instructions for realizing an artwork ie for re/producing an action, a sound, an interaction etc. I've avoided the word "script" as it implies dialogue and directions towards a relatively fixed result. The instructions can take several forms – text, drawings, Keep in mind that scores which utilize chance may have several components including the description of the chance procedure (ie. throwing dice, shaking a bag), the elements on which the procedure is performed (musical notes, physical movements etc.) and the performance that results.

Guidelines:

Scores should take less than 5 minutes to perform.

If your score uses props, they must be reasonable – something that anyone has in their home or that can be easily borrowed or bought and transported to class.

Remember to leave room for interpretation!

Schedule:

January 20/21: Workshop bring in potential props and ideas for discussion

January 24/25: **3 Scores due – Please turn in 2 copies of each score, making sure to also keep one copy for your own use.** Exchange scores and discuss

January 26 – February 1: Perform scores

VERY IMPORTANT:

In the real world many performances are about breaking taboos and often there are no rules. In the classroom, a few are necessary.

1 – No action or performance of an action can cause physical harm or potential physical harm to yourself or to another person (ie. no piercing, cutting, lashing etc).

2 – No guns or other weapons that are illegal on campus may be used as props.

Please refer to attached lists for prop, concept and operation suggestions!

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Ken Friedman's excellent definition of a score:

The idea of musicality in visual art and intermedia has several implications.

It means that a work begins as an idea that is transmitted through a score. It means that the work resides in the idea, in the score and in the realized project. The work is equally present in each form, though present in different ways. It means that a realized project is only one interpretation of the work. It means that any work may have several valid realizations, each an interpretation of the artist who realizes the work, in addition to the many possible interpretations of those who experience the realized work. It means that a work may be realized by individuals other than the artist who creates the idea and embodies it in a score.

The score uses written notation of some kind to communicate instructions for realizing a work of art. The idea and use of the score is originally rooted in music. In visual art and intermedia, the score offered a way to transmit non-musical art forms. It became a method for encoding, recording and transmitting art forms.

Some assigned readings you might find helpful in thinking about this assignment:

McCarthy, Paul, *Instructions* (this is also on reserve if the library if the PDF isn't at ereserves yet)

Oldenburg, Claes, *I am for an Art*

Cage, John, *Indeterminacy* (the introductory paragraph is the score and the stories which follow the content of the "performance")

Clark, Lygia, *Nostalgia of the Body*

Young, LaMont *Lecture 1960*

Some Links to scores on line

Musical scores performed by Sonic Youth on Good-bye 20th Century:

http://www.smellslikerecords.com/sonicyouth/6.php?cat_no=syr004

Some scores by George Brecht:

http://www.ubu.com/concept/brecht_chair.html

http://www.ubu.com/concept/brecht_word.html

http://www.ubu.com/concept/brecht_aqueous.html

Information on works by John Cage:

<http://www.johncage.info/index2.html>

There are several John Cage scores available in the library

Some helpful questions:

How dependant is your action on location? How does changing location affect the action?

How dependant is your action on gender? If performed by a different gender does the meaning change?

Does your prop imply a gender?

How does the style of a prop affect the meaning of your score?

(ex. you specify a chair – how does the style of the chair influence the meaning of the action using it)

How dependent is it on time – what happens if you slow it down, speed it up?

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Prop Suggestions

indigenous materials
construction materials
domestic materials
found materials
matches
whistle
comb
ball of string
phone
scissors
article of clothing
aluminum foil
utensil
water
storage bag
stone
duct tape
measuring tape
tools
clock/ watch
food
container
ice
air
lamp
plant
sheet
towel
cosmetics
radio/walkman/ipod
tea kettle
book/newspaper
candle
pencil/pen
cup/glass
balloon
photograph
instrument
trash

Concept Suggestions

a work based on a text
a work based on chance
a work that requires interaction
a work that is dependant on time
a work that uses another discipline
a work that is dependant on the body of the artist
a work that is dependant on the body of the viewer
a work about ethics
a work about memory
a work about security
a work about consumption
a work about gender
a work about location
a work about taboo
a work about order
a work about disorder
a work about control

Operation Suggestions

speed it up
slow it down
reverse it
invert it
shake it
change the function
change the context
change the use
add narrative
add silence
add sound
add light
use repetition
use what's available
use what's missing