

LCC 6310
The Computer as an
Expressive Medium

Lecture 10

Overview

Discuss readings
Readings for next week
Look at assignment 3

Readings

Summary presentations & questions for discussion

Happenings in the New York Scene - Kaprow, NMR pp. 83-86

The Cut-Up Method of Brion Gysin - Burroughs, NMR pp. 89-91

Six Selections by the Oulipo - NMR pp. 147-189

Happenings

Allan Kaprow (1927-2006)

Coined the term 'Happening' in the late 1950s - constellation of performances and events that used various techniques to prompt a creative response from the audience, encouraging audience members to make their own connections between ideas and events. These strategies relied on non-linear sequencing of events and the use of indeterminacy to shape the course of the Happening.



Happening - Kaprow's definition

"A Happening is an assemblage of events performed or perceived in more than one time and place. Its material environments may be constructed, taken over directly from what is available, or altered slightly; just as its activities may be invented or commonplace. A Happening, unlike a stage play, may occur at a supermarket, driving along a highway, under a pile of rags, and in a friend's kitchen, either at once or sequentially. If sequentially, time may extend to more than a year. The Happening is performed according to plan but without rehearsal, audience, or repetition. It is art but seems closer to life."

From *Some Recent Happenings* (Kaprow, 1966)

"The line between art and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible."

From *Guidelines for Happenings* (Kaprow, 1966)

Kaprow's ideas

Art as a vehicle for expanding our awareness of life by prompting unexpected, provocative interactions.

Art as a continual work-in-progress, with an unfolding narrative that is realized through the active participation of the audience.

The decentralization of authorship, location, and narrative, united by the intent of the artist and the imagination of the participating audience members

These ideas foreshadow non-linear forms in digital media that make use of interactive and networked technology to expand the boundaries of space and time.

First Happening

18 Happenings in 6 Parts,
1959, Reuben Gallery, NYC



Unfolded in 3 rooms with clear plastic walls. Slides were projected on one wall while performers walked with their arms at an angle or read aloud from books. Simultaneously, an artist was painting while lighting matches, a woman was squeezing an orange, and an orchestra was playing with toy instruments.

More Happenings



Yard, Martha Jackson Gallery,
NYC, 1961

Lette Eisenhauer Ascending Ladder
in *The Courtyard*, NYC, 1962



No Rules Except

11 year-old Bram Crane-Kaprow worked with his father Allan Kaprow to create a kid space for pillow fights.

LACMA Lab Exhibition, Boone Children's Gallery (2000-2001)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art



[Video clip](#)

The cut-up method

"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD THE BEGINNING WAS IN THE WORD THE WAS IN THE BEGINNING WORD THE WORD WAS IN THE BEGINNING BEGINNING THE WAS THE IN WORD WORD WAS IN THE BEGINNING.

Language is an abominable misunderstanding which makes up a part of matter. The painters and the physicists have treated matter pretty well. The poets have hardly touched it. In March 1958, when I was living at the Beat Hotel, I proposed to Burroughs to at least make available to literature the means that painters have been using for fifty years. Cut words into pieces and scramble them..."

-Brion Gysin, 1963

Brion Gysin



From working on canvas and paper, Gysin continued his idea of text/words as collage material to audio-tape form...

Poem of Poems - [Side A](#) & [Side B](#) (1958, 13:55 & 14:58)

[Pistol Poem](#) (1960, 3:40)

[I Am](#) (1960, 3:03)

[3 Permutations](#) (1960, 4:21)

[No Poets](#) (1962, 0:58)

[Junk is No Good Baby](#) (1962, 2:03)

Oulipo



Ouvroir de littérature potentielle

Founded in 1960 by Raymond Queneau and François Le Lionnais. Other notable members include Georges Perec, Italo Calvino, Paul Fournel, and Jacques Roubaud.

Potential literature is "the search for new forms and structures that may be used by writers in any way they see fit."

(Raymond Queneau)

"The Oulipo's goal is to discover new structures and to furnish for each structure a small number of examples."

(François Le Lionnais)

Cent mille milliards de poèmes

(a hundred thousand billion poems)

Potential literature

10 sonnets, 14-line poems with any of several fixed formal rhyme patterns. Each line of each poem may be replaced by its homologue in the other nine poems. To each of the ten first lines, the reader can add any of ten different second lines: 10^2 . The sonnet has 14 lines, the total possibilities offered by the collection are of the order of 10^{14} (a hundred trillion sonnets)

100,000,000,000,000 poems!

If one spends 1 minute to read 1 sonnet, 8 hours a day, 365 days per year, it would take over 5.7 million centuries to finish the text!

Try it... http://www.bevrowe.info/Poems/QueneauRandom_v4.html

The true literature machine...

"The true literature machine will be one that itself feels the need to produce disorder, as a reaction against its preceding production of order: a machine that will produce avant-garde work to free its circuits when they are choked by too long a production of classicism."

(Italo Calvino)

What do you think?

Readings for next week

For **Tuesday** next week:

Concepts: typography, text manipulation

For **Thursday** next week: Theory Readings

Two students: present one reading each

Everyone else: prepare one discussion question for each reading

Augmenting Human Intellect: A Conceptual Framework - Engelbart (NMR pp.93-108)

Computer Lib/Dream Machines - Nelson (NMR pp.301-339)

Assignment 3

Posted online, due **Friday October 5**

A3-01: Create a subclass of `PImage` that implements a `mosaic(int blockSize)` method. The `blockSize` parameter specifies how big the mosaic block is (e.g. `blockSize = 4` would mean the mosaic block size is 4 pixels by 4 pixels). The `mosaic` method should replace each block of pixels in the image (e.g. if `blockSize = 4`, each block of 4 by 4 pixels) with the average color value of the pixels in that block. Look at the `Pixelate->Mosaic` filter in photoshop for an example of what this image operation does. Demonstrate your new class by drawing an image with several different block sizes.

A3-02: Write a small app that demonstrates kinetic text. Your app should allow the user to type something and move the text around in some way while they type. For example, the user might type text on a line, but slowly the words or letters start drifting apart, or perhaps the line starts bending, or the words and letters flutter to the bottom of the screen, etc. Of course you shouldn't exactly copy any of the typographic examples in Processing or that you find on the web (though using such examples for inspiration, as a place to start modifying code, etc. is fine).