

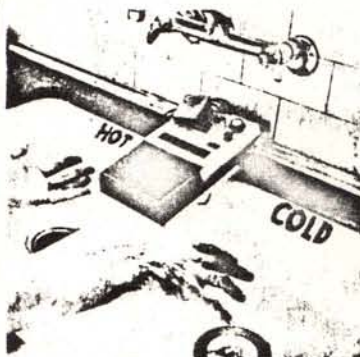
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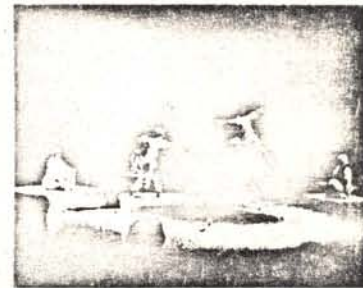
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John White, *Clothing as Form*, 1971.  
Vancouver, British Columbia.



Allan Kaprow, *Affect*, 1974.

Pauline Oliveros, *Crow 11*, 1975.  
Mandeville Center, University of  
California, San Diego. Photo William  
Moritz



Eleanor Antin, *Eleanor 1954, 1974*.  
Antin in several of her roles as an  
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Often his little soap dolls act as props and actors in his work. He intimidates, disgusts, and occasionally arouses pity in the audience as he runs them and himself through a gauntlet of primitive states of being. He appears nude, often masked, sitting, vomiting, gyrating, clambering, crawling, and groveling on the floor.

A total reversal in style and content characterizes the work of John White. White lards his performances with humor, stories, actions, and props, and with meticulous choreography which underpins an abundance of associations, events, and images—an abundance which on the surface produces an impression of fragmentation and randomness. White presented a characteristically complex piece, *Autobiographical Forms*, at LAICA in 1975. The first action of the piece was to locate the audience in space-time. He began by standing in front of a cassette player hung on a wall which played back White's account of events during a peace rally in the 1960s. The rally had been held in an empty lot which later housed LAICA. An episode about an older man hit by a billyclub "took place just over there," the tape voice informed the audience, indicating the spot where they were sitting. It went on to focus the audience's attention on their own bodies, itemizing each part of the body on the tape. In this piece White utilized an arsenal of props, including a melon, a potato, a jock strap, and an envelope taped to his chest containing cue cards for each story. He had employed simpler routines in his earlier events, such as in *Newspile* (1969-1970), in which he had certain members of the audience lie in a circle on the floor while the rest covered them with masses of crumpled newspaper. Each participant on the floor had been told to come to a thousand and then leave. The end of the piece was thus a protracted scene in which the participants struggled to disentangle themselves from the piles of newspaper and get out.

White's work as a psychiatric group therapist in 1971-1972 caused him to use Performance as a therapeutic tool with patients—with highly inventive and successful results—and to include autobiographical material in his own pieces. In one Performance White enumerated and analyzed the effects of derogatory terms describing women learned during his childhood; another he laboriously tracked down what had happened to high school classmates; several had committed suicide. Other lower-keyed works are based on his enjoyment of and interest in golf.

Allan Kaprow has moved into the psychological arena in his art, but with a difference. His work since the late 1960s has been motivated by general interest and curiosity about his own and others' behavior in interactive situations rather than by a desire to filter overt autobiographical experiences into Performance. Kaprow now works with precisely planned and executed situations with no audience. The public theatricality of his early Happenings had been completely tempered by the time Kaprow moved to Southern California in 1969. He attributes this shift to the rather unsatisfying but enlightening experiences in Berkeley in 1968-1969, where Kaprow worked on an experimental educational program, *Project Other Ways*, funded by the Carnegie Foundation. Among the events that he and the high school students worked on was *Giveaway* (1969), in which each participant bought one dollar's worth of secondhand clothing, washed and pressed it, and tried, often unsuccessfully, to get rid of it away. In the turbulent, paranoid Berkeley of the late 1960s such guilelessness was regarded with suspicion. Kaprow recalls, "Nobody understood motives in those days. It was awkward time but I learned a lot. I learned, for example, how ultimately private I am in spite of my wish to be otherwise. With this new insight in tow, Kaprow came to teach at Cal A in 1969. This was the period when his work shifted from "objective and social" work routines with large groups of people (as in *Fluids*) to activities with smaller groups and then to "pieces revolving around routines of domesticity, private life and finally to sensitized, subjective and psychological pieces dealing with individual psychic responses."

Kaprow now works with pairs or small groups of people. Much of his current research is concerned with miming a presence and response. For example, two friends

## Moira Roth: Toward a history of California Performance

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