**Purging, Dust, and Time Travel – erasure and recovery in Fluxus and Black Quantum Futurism**

**by Florian Cramer**

Abstract

The essay compares the poetics of erasure in political manifestations and computer-generative poetry in the 1960s Fluxus movement to contemporary poetics of restitution of the Black Quantum Futurism collective. Common grounds of Fluxus and Black Quantum Futurism include: linkage of aesthetics and politics, process-based and participatory art, identity of art and lived communal practice, anti-racist and ecological critique. Fluxus involved radical programs to “purge the world” and “overthrow the human race” as well as reformist poetics and practices of unstable habitats. Through the lens of Black Quantum Futurism, the Fluxus poetics of erasure and unstability seems to be retrospectively problematic.

Since the 20th century, process-based arts have been informed by poetics of erasure. Fluxus is a particularly interesting case: it had processuality in its name, its practice involved early forms of performance art and computer-programmed poetry, and had been intended by its founder and impresario George Maciunas in 1963 to be a radical left-populist movement that “purge[s] the world” of bourgeois culture and “Europanism”. In 1968, Maciunas’ close collaborator Henry Flynt demanded in a manifesto to “overthrow the human race”, among others with a “thermonuclear ‘spasm’ war”. Maciunas’ and Flynt’s programs and street interventions anticipated major aspects of today’s radical activism, including decolonial anti-racist activism and radical posthumanist ecologism. This also included boycott campaigns (or, in today’s terminology: a ‘cancel culture’) against artists they accused of white suprematism, such as the composer Karlheinz Stockhausen.

Consequently, Maciunas’

George Maciunas' Flux Manifesto:

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