



a secondary archive and research center.

During these early years of activity, Fluxus West also became involved with education and therapy, through Friedman's teaching at San Francisco State College Experimental College. Courses offered at the Experimental College, and by special arrangement through the English Department and Radio-Television-Film Department were among the first university-level courses devoted to the study and practice of areas of contemporary art such as intermedia, concept art, and research art. Richard Maxfield, the composer, had arrived in San Francisco and during the Spring of 1967 was often to be found at the Fluxus West place on ~~800~~ Buchanan street, in addition to teaching the controversial courses in contemporary music which earned him his dismissal from the San Francisco State College Music Department. A high-light of the 1967 Spring Semester was a slide-and-tape reconstruction of Dick Higgins' electronic opera, ~~XXXXXX~~ Stacked Deck, which had premiered in New York in 1960. During these years, Jeff Berner, who was also a member of the Fluxus group - and who was responsible with Ian Grand for bringing Friedman to the faculty of the Experimental College - published a wide variety of contemporary material through his Stolen Paper Editions. One of the first above-ground exhibitions of Fluxus material - and one of the few during those years - was Berner's exhibition "Astronauts of Inner Space" presented at the San Francisco Museum of Art and later at Stanford University. Friedman's event activities, meanwhile, moved into a therapeutic context, and many of them turned out to be closely related to exercises developed for the Human Potential Movement at Esalen Institute, Kairos, and related centers. Along with activities at Fluxus West and San Francisco State, Fluxus West and Friedman presented performances or cooperated with other programs, including Stephen Gaskin's courses later to become The Monday Night Class, benefits such as the Phoenix Medical Supply Ship Viet Nam Benefit at the Fillmore auditorium, several of Stewart Brand's multi-media extravaganzas and many of the mini-Festivals or mass gatherings - including the famous January 1967 Human Be-In at Golden Gate Park. Fluxus West sought, through a wide variety of activities, to explore the possibility of creative cultural life on a widely-available basis. ~~XXXX~~ Not all the experiments proved successful - such as a reconstructed Surrealist Research Bureau and Surrealist Congress, developed as learning tools for Friedman's course in "Literature of Surrealism and the Avant-Garde", which were closed and discontinued when Fluxist Wolf Vostell argued convincingly that despite any possible value as a learning device, the Surrealist experience was essentially invalid for the present era. Nonetheless, Fluxus West proved itself capable of experimentation in developing new methods for cultural exploration, and grew in scope and capability by learning from the results, both positive and negative, of its experimentation.

As early as 1963, Friedman began a highly-mobile travelling lifestyle which - in 1966 when he joined the Fluxus group - took Fluxus activities out of their New York center and through New England and the Mid-Atlantic states. In 1967, Fluxus West acquired its first Fluxmobile, a used Volkswagen bus which was used as a travelling center for exhibitions and festivals. During those years, various branches of the Unitarian Universalist denomination, through their conferences and youth programs, also sponsored a

wide variety of Fluxus activities around the nation. It is interesting to note that between 1966 and 1976, Fluxus West brought various forms of Fluxus exhibitions, events, performances and workshops to 40 of the 50 United States and to 3 of the Canadian provinces. By bus, plane, car, train and boat, Fluxus West and its members became a mobile cultural center spreading seeds and ideas across the continent.

By the Fall of 1967, a regular pattern of Fluxmobile trips up and down the West Coast became established which continued through the early '70's, alternating with occasional long excursions to inland areas or to the Midwest or East Coast. Many of the longer trips were organized by air, rather than in the bus, and these frequently were arranged to coincide with other activities for which sponsorship and funding could be obtained. Despite the tremendous level of activity achieved by Fluxus West in those years, not one penny of grant support or public funding was available to its activities. This was a time when the artists who by the '70's would become world-famous were still considered eccentric, a time when Nam June Paik's video was still considered a medium totally unsuited to art, and a time when the name Christo was found only in church. The exhibitions organized and so widely presented by Fluxus West were attended by almost anyone but art world habitues, and the only critic to recognize the new phenomenon on the West Coast was the San Francisco Chronicle's Thomas Albright.

In the Spring of 1968, a good turn of events brought some revenue to Fluxus West. In seeking to acquire publications of the Underground Press Syndicate, the University of California purchased a large body of the Fluxus West publications and other materials for its Mandeville Department of Special Collections at U.C. San Diego. This opened a new area of fundraising which from time to time has been of help to continuing activities. During the Reagan years, however, the University was vastly restricted in its purchasing power, and at that time, Ken Friedman continued to supply gifts which became the core of what is now The Ken Friedman Collection housed in the Archive for New Poetry at UCSD. The University at San Diego proved remarkably hospitable to the contemporary mentality, and Professor David Antin - who had recently arrived from New York - in 1969 organized the first Fluxus exhibition presented on the West Coast by an institute which was not Fluxus affiliated.

In the Fall of 1968, the Fluxus West San Francisco Center moved to Dolores Street, not far from the corner of Market. Located there off and on through 1969-70, activities were to continue. In 1970, the center was briefly relocated to Marin County, and then to Berkeley, where - on Woolsey Street - the last home of Fluxus West to be maintained in the Bay Area stood until December, 1970. By this time, the San Francisco Museum of Conceptual Art had just opened, other ventures were in the air, and when Dick Higgins brought the Something Else Press out West to join the new and then-promising California Institute of the Arts, Friedman relocated the Fluxus West center to Newhall, California, where he took up a position as General Manager of the Something Else Press while continuing to direct Fluxus West.

Kaprow &

The bright promise of Cal Arts faded with relative swiftness, but in its first year, Fluxus members were well-represented with the presence of Higgins, Paik, Emmett Williams, Noel Williams, Peter van Riper, Alison Knowles on the faculty, Shigeo Kubota and Friedman nearby, and such Fluxus friends as Simone Forti, ~~and~~ Allan Kaprow & Shuya Abe in the environment. Higgins decided to leave Cal Arts by the Spring of 1971, and when the decision was made to relocate Something Else Press to Vermont, Friedman relocated all Fluxus West operations into a single center in San Diego and began directing all other operations from the second Fluxmobile which had been purchased in 1970 during the Marin County stay. This second Fluxmobile has seen many years of good use between flying trips, and during a recent trip to the Southeast, one midnight in North Central Tennessee, on the way to Kentucky, turned the 100,000 mile mark.

Before this time, however, an interesting transformation had taken place. Where up to 1969, Fluxus West had served the major purpose of bringing international information into the United States, in 1969, Fluxus West took up the role of creating a strong international network of communications and collaboration. When the planning began for the famous Fluxus & Happening show in Cologne, Germany, Fluxus West spawned its first outpost beyond the borders of the United States, Fluxus West in Germany, directed by Wolfgang Feelisch and Dietrich Albrecht. In a sense, however, one might regard this action as bringing coals to Newcastle. The next step, however, was to have vast significance. The University of Exeter, in England, had created in the late '60's an American Arts Documentation Centre, headed by Dr. Michael Weaver. Weaver contacted Friedman, originally to obtain Fluxus West's Fluxus Underground Press Syndicate Publications. In the course of correspondence, Weaver enquired about gathering in other Fluxus material for use and study. Friedman responded that the best way to study the material was to create it, and to do the best job, a Fluxus Centre ought to be launched in England. Weaver agreed, and became Director of Fluxus West in England. He attracted to his staff David Mayor, who as Associate Director, and then as founder/editor of Beau Geste Press, ~~carried~~ carried out the famous Fluxshoe travelling Fluxus Year through the British Isles. The residue of those years between 1970 and 1975, when Beau Geste closed shop, can be found in many ways - notably a dramatic hooking up of international talent and communication through Mayor's programs and the Fluxus West Archives which still remain at the University of Exeter. During these years, Fluxus West began sending out as much as it brought in, and a firm international exchange began to take place in which through its activities, Fluxus West began to export goods and services and to establish channels of international participation as much as creating them in the United States.