

## **Review Report on PhD Thesis**

Submitted to: Weronika Trojańska

Doctoral Thesis in the Field of Art, Discipline of Fine Arts and Art Conservation

The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, Doctoral School

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**Title of Thesis:** *Fluxus is in a Permanent State of Improvisation*

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Weronika Trojańska's doctoral thesis, *Fluxus is in a Permanent State of Improvisation*, primarily addresses one of Fluxus's most distinctive artistic forms: the Event Score. This investigation leads to the development of the web application *Event Swirl*. Through the lens of Fluxus scores—short instructional texts for performing artworks—Trojańska gradually constructs a narrative that culminates in an invitation to the reader for an individual, participatory experience.

What makes this thesis particularly compelling are the numerous quotes drawn from personal conversations with Fluxus artists, scholars and theoreticians. These voices offer intimate perspectives on performance and illuminate the impossibility of defining Fluxus in systematic terms—whether aesthetic or authorial. As Trojańska concludes, “Fluxus, as the name implies, is in flux. It is an open work. It is in movement” (p. 59).

The thesis is divided into two equally essential parts: “the paper” and “the application,” both defined early on. The theoretical component, “the paper,” investigates questions of authorship, reenactment, game and the mindfulness of performed events. The practical component, “the application,” invites the reader to engage directly in a Fluxus-inspired “event” via a web platform.

As an artist myself, my attention was first drawn to the application, which I view as a Net.Art work—recalling the interactive internet-based artworks of the late 1990s. *Event Swirl*, with its clear structure and participatory framework, is a direct continuation of the Fluxus tradition. Not only does it invite users to enact events, it also allows them to propose their own, enabling a viral participatory dynamic. It is a living, self-generating platform for Event Scores. The key difference between this and historical Fluxus works lies in its use of hypertext and digital communication rather than oral or print-based distribution. Yet *Event Swirl* is not merely an interpretation or adaptation of Fluxus—it is a Fluxus work, updated for contemporary conditions and digital

presence (p. 15). The integration between theory and practice is fluid, demonstrating the author's sensitivity to the aesthetics and philosophical currents of Fluxus.

However, the thesis would benefit from stronger contextualization of its artistic and research elements. While the author draws on primary sources and personal interviews, there is a notable absence of broader historical and theoretical framing. A literature review is a standard component of scholarly research, and Fluxus—as one of the key art movements of the 20th century—has been extensively discussed by artists, historians, and theorists. Contextual links to Dada, Pop Art, and the countercultural movements of the 1960s and 70s (e.g., Beat and Hippie movements), as well as a critical contrast with mainstream tendencies like Abstract Expressionism and Photorealism, would have deepened the analysis. Furthermore, Fluxus's influence on later developments such as Relational Aesthetics and Net.Art—especially pertinent given the form of *Event Swirl*—could have been explored more rigorously.

This lack of contextual grounding sometimes leaves the thesis in a “flux” of ideas and impressions that could have been more meaningfully anchored. As the author notes in her conclusion: “What I have written in this paper is just a glimpse of what I consider to be my story with Fluxus... if I wanted to write everything... it would have to be another hundreds of pages at least or I would just never stop” (p. 59). With appropriate contextualization, the value of the work could be articulated more precisely.

The thesis touches on significant themes, especially authorship, games, reenactment, and mindfulness. These are rich areas that merit further exploration. Particularly engaging is the discussion of the author's experience performing Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece*. The inability to include this performance in her portfolio raises questions of authorship and intellectual property. With the right references—such as those mentioned in the thesis (classical music performances or Roland Barthes's “The Death of the Author”)—and thoughtful framing, these reenactments could have been developed more clearly. Even the publication of documentation from these performances would not necessarily pose legal issues, and could have strengthened the thesis's argument.

Despite these shortcomings, the insights presented—especially around authorship, mindfulness, and reenactment—are valuable and suggest fruitful directions for further inquiry. The interviews conducted with Fluxus artists and scholars offer irreplaceable perspectives and convey the deeply personal, ambiguous, and open-ended character of Fluxus. Trojańska captures this when she writes, “At the end of the day, no one knows what Fluxus is.”

The recontextualization of Fluxus through the lens of contemporary web applications is especially promising. This might further lead to the culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which sometimes is referred to

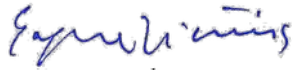
as the century of Maker culture: short manuals and video tutorials to engage with audiences, posted on social platforms. This approach deserves further refinement and critical elaboration.

The summary of the thesis is clear and effectively communicates the core themes and contributions of the work.

Overall, it is recommended that the candidate be awarded the PhD degree.

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