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MAIL-ART ON WIKIPEDIA

(selection)

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

When the electronic telecommunications network known as the Internet gave rise to e-mail art, conventional mail-art artists came to refer to the international postal service as the 'paper net' or snail-mail net. When a group of these artists are in some way linked through their works they are collectively referred to as a Mail Art Network or the Eternal Network.

The Mail-Art Network concept has roots in the work of earlier groups, including the Fluxus artists and the notion of 'multiples' or artworks manufactured as editions. Most commonly, Mail-Art Network artists have made and exchanged postcards, designed custom-made stamps or 'artistamps', and designed decorated or illustrated envelopes. But even large and unwieldy three-dimensional objects have been known to have been sent by Mail-Art Network artists, for many of whom the message and the medium are synonymous.

Fundamentally, mail art in the context of a Mail Art Network is a form of conceptual art. It is a 'movement' with no membership and no leaders.

Mail artists like to claim that mail art began when Cleopatra had herself delivered to Julius Caesar in a rolled-up carpet (although this was neither mail nor art). However, perhaps the initial genesis of mail art was in postal stationery, from which mail art is now typically distinguished (if not defined in its broadest sense). The first example of postal stationery was the pictorial design created by the English artist William Mulready (1786-1863) for mass printing-press reproduction on the first stock of prepaid postage wrappers or envelopes produced for the launch of the Penny Post in Britain in 1840.



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MAIL-ART

SHORT STATEMENTS ABOUT MAIL-ART BY RUUD JANSSEN

Fluxus and Mail-Art

This Fluxus
Fluxus it
must Fluxus
feel Fluxus be
there Fluxus
r2007

FLUXUS AND MAIL-ART

As many already know I work these days in both Mail-Art and Fluxus worlds. Some wonder if that is possible. Shouldn't it be one or the other?

ROOTS

The roots of Mail-Art. Still a tricky point. Is it Ray Johnson, is it the postal system that started, actually that isn't that important. The roots of Fluxus. The starting point where a group started to work in the same way is very well documented. In the definition on Wikipedia one can read that the roots of mail-art also come from Fluxus. Not the other way around

FLUXUS

Jon Hendrickx published the Fluxus Codex and also states that Fluxus stopped in 1978 with the death of George Maciunas. What he forgot it that the world with the other Fluxus Artists just kept on working and producing. Also new artists associated themselves with Fluxus and started to work in the same spirit. The Fluxus artistic philosophy can be expressed as a synthesis of four key factors that define the majority of Fluxus work:

1. Fluxus is an attitude. It is not a movement or a style.
2. Fluxus is intermedia. Fluxus creators like to see what happens when different media intersect. They use found & everyday objects, sounds, images, and texts to create new

combinations of objects, sounds, images, and texts.

3. Fluxus works are simple. The art is small, the texts are short, and the performances are brief.

4. Fluxus is fun. Humour has always been an important element in Fluxus.

(source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fluxus>)

As you can see from these 4 factors, some could be used for mail-art as well.

FLUXUS or MAIL-ART IN WHICH DO YOU BELONG?

MAIL-ART

There are some basic things in mail-art that are different from Fluxus. In Fluxus the works might be 'simple', but the concepts mostly are very deep and well thought out. Also the documentation of it all normally happens on a professional way. In Mail-art it is common use to accept all works for mail-art projects. But what one forget that in 1973 the first mail-art project (Omaha Flow Systems) was realized by Ken Friedman who used the concept:

(KF:) The more immediate inception of the Omaha Flow Systems] project finds its roots in my One Year One Man Show presented by the Oakland Museum in 1972. George Neubert, Curator of Art of the Oakland Museum, invited me to present a solo exhibition which would somehow give the meat and substance of my work. I therefore designed a show which would provide a flow

of information growing, changing, maturing and regressing along with the flow of my life. Naturally, for a show of this nature, it seemed logical to take a year, sending in the show at intervals by mail. As it came about, some friends who are part of that life heard about it, and asked to send things in. And, in the course of allowing my life to happen, I let the invitation go abroad until hundreds of people were joining me in my show. When invited to show at The Vancouver Art Gallery, I decided to consciously utilize the participation of my friends, rather than just allowing it, and the result was Ken Friedman and Friends in Process, a presentation of the intersections, parallels, and interstices of our mutual labors in the arts. Work in Progress, the final pre-Omaha systemic from which the Flow System derived, involved the forwarding of all my mail over a six-month span to The Henry Art Gallery of the University of Washington in Seattle, while the museum engendered massive public participation by a saturation campaign of invitations throughout the region.(source: http://sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/atca/subjugated/five_14.htm)

REACTIONS

If you want to react to these small publications, you are more than welcome to do so. I suggest you do it in the form of a publication as well. Give others something to read as well... And send me a copy for my own collection.