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2002 was marked the fortieth anniversary of the Wiesbaden festival that led a floating the experimental laboratory of designers, artists, architects, and composers to adopt the name Fluxus as a rubric for their intermedia forum. 2002 also marked the publication of the first monograph-length philosophical treatment of the Fluxus idea by a single author.

For many years, writing on Fluxus was the province of enthusiasts, curators, journalists, and art critics. While the writings were often interesting, they were just as often filled with historical errors that did more to reveal the authors than to explain Fluxus. Fluxus also benefited from two special groups of documents. One is the astonishing series of documentary collections compiled by Jon Hendricks for the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Foundation. The other group comprises fifty years of pamphlets, catalogues, books, documents, event scores, and text-based artifacts published by the Fluxus artists and designers. Occasional exhibition catalogues and special journal issues provided a responsible and rich variety of critical and historical views by such authors as Stephen Foster, Peter Frank, Estera Milman, or Marilyn Ravicz. Until the 1990s, however, serious, sympathetic, and well-informed discussions of Fluxus from a philosophical and historical view were uncommon.

In the 1990s, a new generation of scholars began to fill this gap. Hannah Higgins is a charter member of a group that has included such scholars as Simon Anderson, David Doris, Kathy O'Dell, Stephen Perkins, Craig Saper, Owen Smith, and Kristine Stiles. Many have also written on design, communication, and media studies, and Smith wrote an authoritative history of Fluxus. With Fluxus Experience, the field moves forward to the deeper consideration of central themes and topics.

Higgins builds on well-known (and less known) facts to develop surprising conclusions. She reveals the hidden depths in apparently simple Fluxus ideas that reverberate across an unexpected range of topics that others have overlooked.
Higgins makes the important point that Fluxus is experience before it is art, and the philosophical and experiential nature of Fluxus has enabled it to remain a lively presence while art movements come and go. In doing so, Higgins points to two issues. The first is a philosophical link to John Dewey, pragmatist philosopher and educator. The second is the fact that Fluxus has been an educational and philosophical venture from the beginning.

Higgins opens with a re-reading of Fluxus through the topic of vision and a close reading of several works. Close reading becomes a central strategy of this book as Higgins examines specific works and types of work to develop her theme. She also draws on philosophical and political ideas to good effect, starting with films and optical experiments, and ending with globalization and the event as democratic practice.

In 'Charting Fluxus: Picturing History,' the author explores how Fluxus artists diagrammed themselves to construct a vision of the world. This leads a reception history of Fluxus, examining and how it influenced - and was ignored by - the Pop Art and Conceptual Art of the 1960s and 1970s. 'Great Expectations: A Reception Typology' goes further in examining how Fluxus was understood and misunderstood.

The core of the book appears in a final chapter that is interesting as history and philosophy. 'Teaching and Learning as Art Forms: Toward a Fluxus-Inspired Pedagogy' also addresses a number of debates that feature currently in design and design education, covering some of the issues that John Chris Jones addresses in his 'daffodil' essays. This chapter focuses on Fluxus as a pedagogical encounter with the world.

After discussing John Cage's composition classes at the New School for Social Research, Higgins discusses some of the Fluxus artists who have been deeply involved in teaching. The core of this chapter is an investigation of Robert Filliou, author of a book titled 'Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts.'

Past writers have often neglected the important focus on learning and teaching among Fluxus artists. This book performs a great service by foregrounding an activity topic that has deeply engaged many Fluxus artists.

While Hannah Higgins's book brings a rich range of issues to the surface of Fluxus studies, it is worth noting that the anthropologist Marilyn Ekdahl Ravicz addressed these issues
thirty years ago in the first doctoral dissertation written on Fluxus. Ravicz's work has been overlooked for two reasons, first because it ahead of its time and second because Ravicz came from outside the art world. These themes require a broad interdisciplinary perspective that is only now emerging thanks to the contributions of such scholars as Higgins.

Fluxus Experience is a work of serious scholarship and powerful analysis. Minor flaws, including mistaken dates and several inaccurate quotes, mark the book. These are problematic when they reduce the power of Higgins's claims, or take an opposite view to that of the quoted authors. One would not care about such flaws in a lesser book. A book as good as this book is ought to be perfect in all details.

This book is more than a history. It is a philosophical inquiry suited to a group of designers and artists who were active in far more than art and the formal aspects of design. Hannah Higgins offers a grand account of Fluxus in a book that will enable thoughtful readers to participate reflectively in the Fluxus Experience.