

by
Alison
Knowles



1965
A Great Bear Pamphlet
New York

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#1 —

Shuffle (1961)

The performer or performers shuffle into the performance area and away from it, above, behind, around, or through the audience. They perform as a group or solo: but quietly.

Premiered August 1963 at National Association of Chemists and Perfumers in New York at the Advertisers' Club.

#2 —

Proposition (October, 1962)

Make a salad.

Premiered October 21st, 1962 at Institute for Contemporary Arts in London.

#2a —

Variation #1 on Proposition (October, 1964)

Make a soup.

Premiered November 9th, 1964 at Cafe au Go Go in New York.

#3 —

Nivea Cream Piece (November, 1962) — for Oscar Williams

First performer comes on stage with a bottle of hand cream, labeled “Nivea Cream” if none is available. He pours the cream onto his hands, and massages them in front of the microphone. Other performers enter, one by one, and do the same thing. Then they join together in front of the microphone to make a mass of massaging hands. They leave in the reverse of the order they entered, on a signal from the first performer.

Premiered November 25th, 1962 at Alle Scenen Theater, Copenhagen, at Fluxus Festival.

#3a —

Variation #1 on Nivea Cream Piece (no date, evolved through many performances from the above)

Large quantities of Nivea Cream must be available, at least one large jar per person. The performers enter and each lathers up his arms and face, then his colleagues, in a fragrant pig-pile.

#4 —

Child Art Piece (December, 1962)

The performer is a single child, two or three years old. One or both parents may be present to assist him with a pail of water or a banana, etc. When the child leaves the stage the performance is over.

Premiered at the Fluxus Festival, Staatliche Kunstakademie, Dusseldorf on February 3rd, 1963.

#4a —

Variation #1 on Child Art Piece (May, 1964)

Exit in a new suit.

Premiered June 27th, 1964 at Fluxus Concert, Carnegie Recital Hall, New York. This variation was written for the New York City performance when the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children forbade the performance of Child Art Piece in its original form.

#5 —

Street Piece (October, 1962 to March, 1963)

Make something in the street and give it away.

Premiered in August, 1963. #9 and #11 are really variations on this piece.

#6 —

Shoes of Your Choice (March, 1963)

A member of the audience is invited to come forward to a microphone if one is available and describe a pair of shoes, the ones he is wearing or another pair. He is encouraged to tell where he got them, the size, color, why he likes them, etc.

Premiered April 6th, 1963 at the Old Gymnasium of Douglass College, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

#7 —

Piece for Any Number of Vocalists (December, 1962)

Each thinks beforehand of a song, and, on a signal from the conductor, sings it through.

Premiered May 11th, 1963 at Hardware Poets' Theater, New York, during the Yamdays.

#8 —**Performance Piece #8 (Summer, 1965)**

Divide a variety of objects into two groups. Each group is labeled “everything.” These groups may include several people. There is a third division of the stage empty of objects labeled “nothing.” Each of the objects is “something.” One performer combines and activates the objects as follows for any desired duration of time:

1. something with everything
2. something with nothing
3. something with something
4. everything with everything
5. everything with nothing
6. nothing with nothing

The *Alison Knowles T Dictionary** is a graphic performance of this piece, which uses words as one group of objects and images as the other.

see list of publications

#9 —
Color Music #2 (October, 1963), original version

Print in the streets.

1st movement: orange
2nd movement: black
3rd movement: blue

Performed Autumn, 1963, on Canal Street in New York.

#9a —
Variation on Color Music #2, original version (Autumn, 1963)

Performed Autumn, 1963, on Canal Street in New York. Same as above except that white, aluminum, and cerise were used.

#9b —
Color Music #2 (Autumn, 1963), revised version

Print a silk screen on the pavements and streets of a city. This piece is dangerous. Have some ready excuses such as “This ink is water soluble.”

**#10 —
Braid (March, 1964)**

The performers, usually two, find something to braid, hair, yarn, etc., and do so.

Premiered April 11th, 1964 at Fluxhall, in New York.

**#10a —
Variation #1 on #10 (“String Piece,” April, 1964)**

Tie up the audience.

Premiered May 30th, 1964 at Fluxhall in New York.

**#11 —
Printing Piece (May, 1964)**

This piece is officially deleted from the Alison Knowles canon. What happened was that on May 30th, 1964, at Fluxhall in New York Alison Knowles silk-screened images on any and all objects, animate and inanimate, which were brought to her for imprinting. It was felt to be too close to #5.

#12 —**Simultaneous Bean Reading (Autumn, 1964)**

Using the Alison Knowles Bean Rolls* and six to eight performers, unroll the rolls over the audience and start reading aloud. Have the audience join in. A single performer goes among the other performers with scissors, cutting out large sections of the rolls. This performer determines the length of the performance.

Premiered November 16th, 1964 at Cafe au Go Go, New York City.

#13 —**Composition for Paik (Autumn, 1964)**

Select a platform, or any large square or rectangular area that is set apart, or raised above the room. Measure this area, using Paik as assistant, finding its center. Then drop a plumb line to this point from the ceiling. Find the center of this distance and mark the string with chalk. Build Paik a platform up to this point so that he may sit there for the duration of the performance.

Premiered November 16th, 1964 at Cafe au Go Go, New York.

*see list of publications

#14 —

Chair Piece for George Brecht (Winter, 1965)

Locate an empty chair, before the performance, in the center of the center aisle, equipped with a reading light and a book. If nobody has taken this seat by the intermission, one of the other performers should do so.

Unperformed.

#15 —

Wounded Furniture (Summer, 1965)

This piece uses an old piece of furniture in bad shape. Destroy it further, if you like. Bandage it up with gauze and adhesive. Spray red paint on the wounded joints. Effective lighting helps. This activity may be performed with one or more performers, and simultaneously with other events.

Premiered July 19th, 1965 at Cafe au Go Go, New York.

#16 —

Giveway Construction (1963?)

Find something you like in the street and give it away. Or find a variety of things, make something of them, and give it away.

Premiere date unknown. Note: this is a variation of #6.

#17 —

Color Music #1 (September, 1963) for Dick Higgins

List your problems from one to five.

For each problem list the best solution you can think of.

For each problem also list a color.

Whenever the problem arises in your mind, think first of the best solution, and if you cannot act upon it immediately, switch to concentration on the color until an absolute necessity intervenes.

Premiered October, 1963 at 423 Broadway, New York.

Biographical Information

Born April 29th, 1933 in New York City under sign of Taurus.
Studied at Middlebury College, Pratt Institute, and Manhattan School of Printing.
Lived 1958-1965 at 423 Broadway, at the corner of Canal Street, New York City: now at
238 West 22nd Street in New York.
Is married to Dick Higgins and has two daughters and a cat.
Is a silk-screen cameraman by trade.

Major Exhibitions

One-man show at Nonagon Gallery, New York, Spring 1958.
One-man show at Judson Gallery, New York, January 1962.
Group shows at Spichernstrasse 28, Cologne, Germany, in February, 1963: at "Scissors
Bros. Warehouse," Rolf Nelson Gallery, Los Angeles, in October, 1963: at
Fluxhall, New York, in Spring, 1964: and at Michael Malce's and Bridge Theater,
New York in Autumn, 1964.

Publications

Alison Knowles Bean Rolls, \$5 from Fluxus, P.O. Box 180, New York 13.

“The ‘T’ Dictionary,” in *The Four Suits*, \$5 from Something Else Press, Inc., 160 Fifth Avenue, New York 10010: after 12/1/65.

Included in many issues of *Yam*, *CC V TRE*, *V TRE*, *Fluxus*, etc.

