

Chance Methods

An exploration of the ludic concepts surrounding chance theory and practice.

Chance can be used to describe a wide range of practices, from expressionist painting, performance and participation to procedures that attempt to capture chance occurrences.

Two approaches to the poetics of chance:

Waiting for something to happen.

Making something happen.

The decisive moment – Henri Cartier-Bresson



Richard Wentworth – Making Do and Getting By







<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AmpyiR6kj8>

Asphalt Rundown, Rome, 1969, was Smithson's first 'flow', situated in an abandoned and mundane section of a gravel and dirt quarry in Rome. A large dumptruck released a load of asphalt down a gutted and gullied cliff already marked by time.

Aside from Smithson's interest in working outside of the gallery walls, he also had a strong interest in Jackson Pollock's abstract expressionist works.

Asphalt Rundown relates to the qualities of abstract expressionist painting but extends the notion of canvas and material to the earth, the asphalt becomes an extension beyond paint.



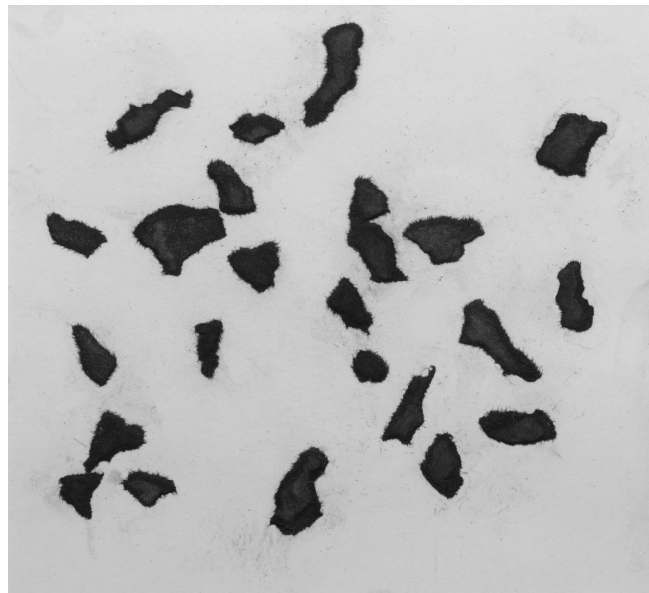
Earthworks artists accept chance and indeterminacy as integral components of their practice as chance and change are material components of the organic.

‘The life span of natural materials will decide the life span of the Environment just as much as nature’s more palpable movements will decide it. (Here the materials as subject matter function also as quasi creators and the line between categories blurs)’.
(Kaprow, Assemblage, Environments and Happenings)

‘Now the risk, or the gesture, rather than being made by the artist from the inside out, as a direct expression of himself, is an ‘act’ of the [work], almost independent of the creator, its scale and meaning deriving from its materials.’

(Lippard, In, Iversen, 2010: 16)

Jean (Hans) Arp was a Dada artist creating compositions using chance. Arp tore pieces of paper, in different colours, into squares, the squares were shuffled and subsequently dropped onto a surface and glued down just as they fell. They became the series of collage work titled *Squares arranged according to the laws of chance*.



Chance procedures involve a risk in the creative act, a risk that implies a certain sacrifice in the act of creation, as the artist gives up control of the production and leaves certain results to circumstance.

The Dice Throw

Nietzsche correlates the dice-throw with multiplicity and the affirmation of chance, where each throw generates potentialities.

When an [author/artist/designer] uses a conceptual form, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the [work]. (Goldsmith www.epc.buffalo.edu)

How to Make a Dadaist Poem:

To make a Dadaist poem:

Take a newspaper.

Take a pair of scissors.

Choose an article as long as you are planning to make your poem.

Cut out the article.

Then cut out each of the words that make up this article and put them in a bag.

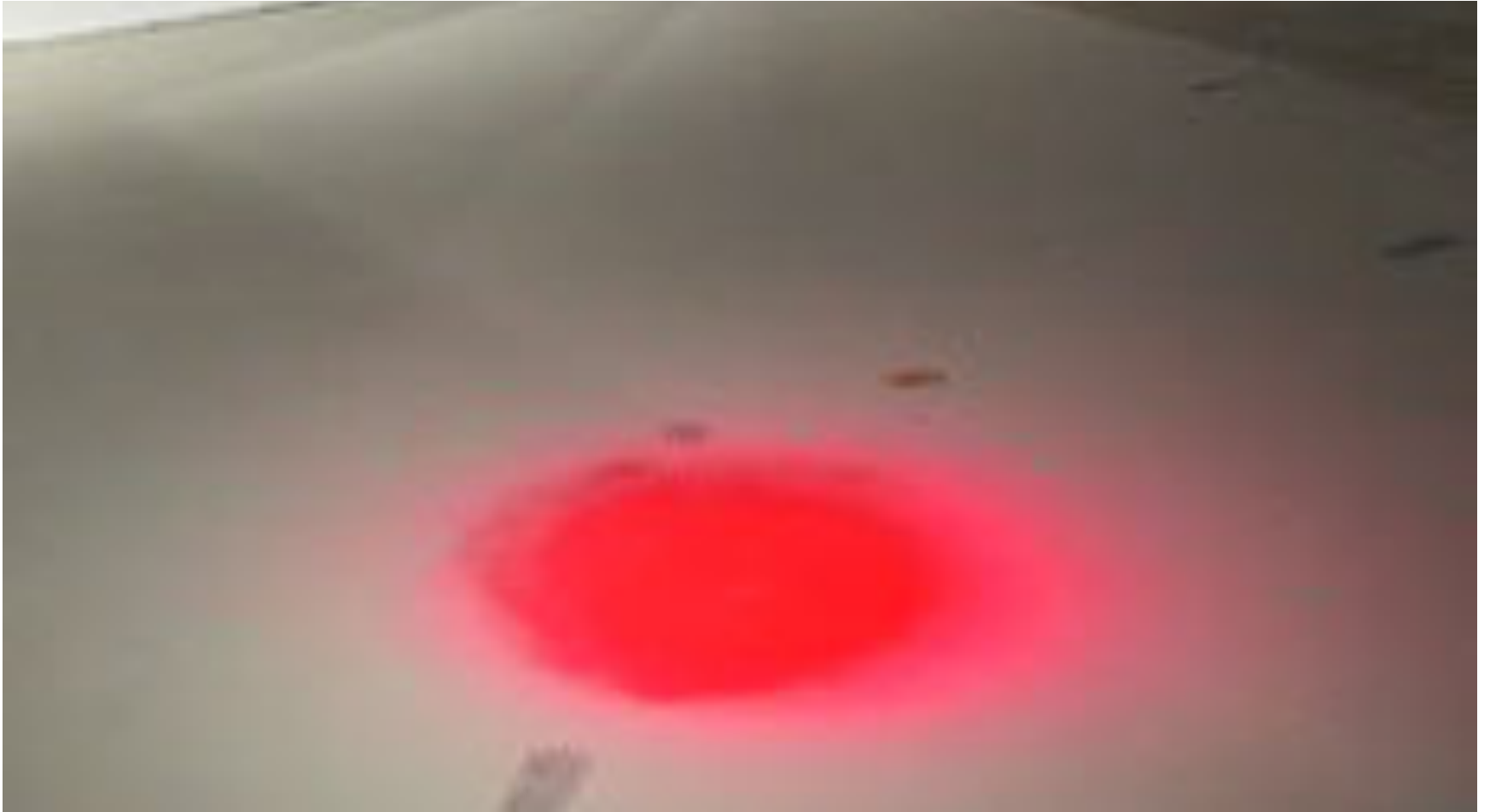
Shake it gently.

Then take out the scraps one after the other in the order in which they left the bag.

Copy conscientiously.

Lawrence Weiner - Declaration of Intent (1968)

Lawrence Weiner is known during his early work for creating gestures described in simple statements leading to the ambiguity of whether the artwork was the gesture or the statement describing the gesture: e.g. 'Two minutes of spray paint directly on the floor..'



Two Minutes Of Spray Paint Directly Upon The Floor From A Standard Aerosol Spray Can, 1968

It is not a matter of unbridled spontaneity or sheer chaos. On the contrary, in these cases the operation of chance occurs only in the context of certain predetermined conditions, much like a deck of cards or a pair of dice. Within those constraints, a process is set in motion that has unpredictable results. (Iversen 2010: 19)



Gloss White Lacquer Sprayed For 2 Minutes At Forty Pound Pressure Directly
Upon The Floor

Draw a straight line and follow it



Follow Different Person Every Day Until Person Enters Private Space

Vito Acconci – Following Piece (1969)



Sophie Calle - Suite Vénitienne (1980)



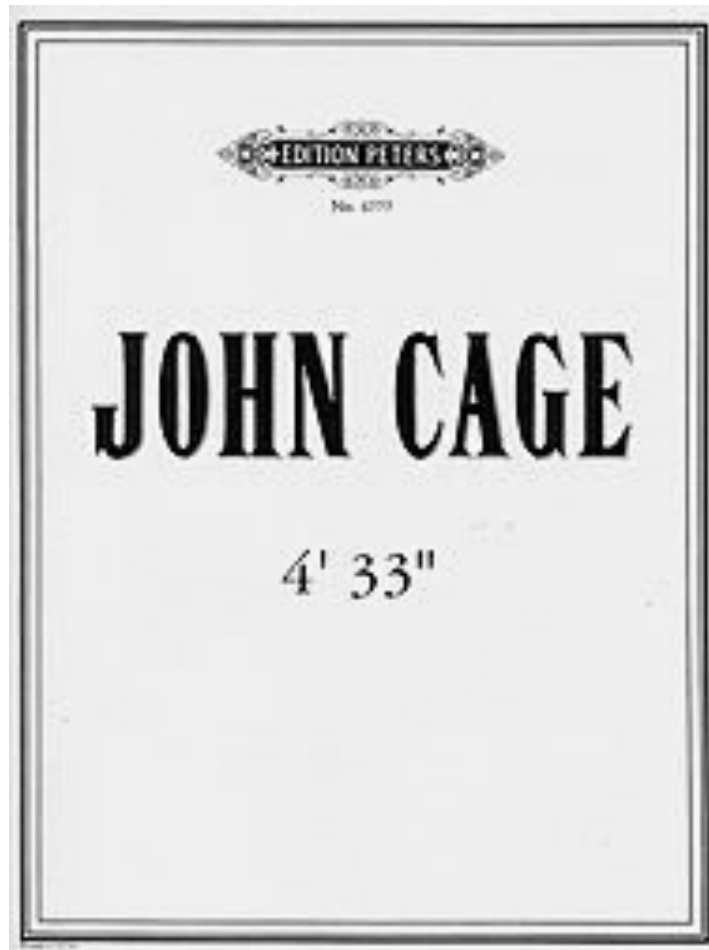


Sophie Calle, *The Detective/The Shadow*, 1981





Bas Jan Ader, *In search of the miraculous*, 1975



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTEFKFiXSx4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcHnL7aS64Y>

In 4'33" Cage creates a smooth space where the music does not follow lines of notation but rather becomes a space of potentiality, a space of chance, where the sounds and events of the auditorium become the performance.



John Cage, 4'33", performed by David Tudor

