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News

Fluxus is alive and well at New York university galleries

Two exhibitions at CUNY and NYU focus on artist Alison Knowles and cellist Charlotte Moorman

by [GABRIELLA ANGELETI](#) | 30 September 2016



Alison Knowles, *The House of Dust* (Image: courtesy Alison Knowles and James Fuentes, NY)

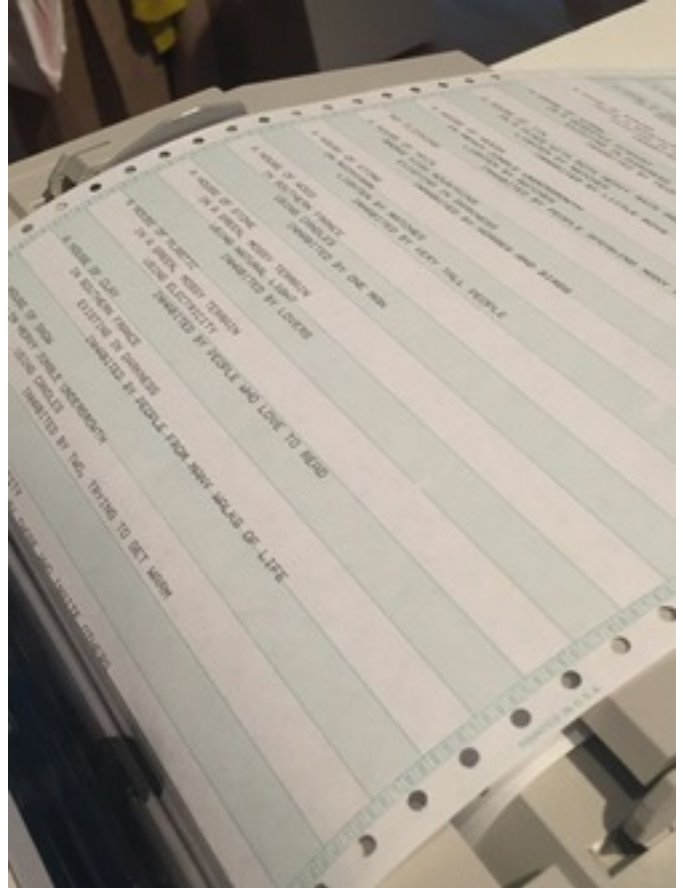
The House of Dust, the 1967 “mechanised poem” by the Fluxus artists Alison Knowles and James Tenney, has been recreated for an exhibition at the James Gallery at the City University of New York (until 29 October).

The House of Dust, the 1967 “mechanised poem” by the Fluxus artists Alison Knowles and James Tenney

The poem—originally programmed on a Siemens 4004 computer using Fortran—is recreated in the exhibition on a printer which continually generates the computerised poem on dot-matrix paper, beginning with the line “a house of...” followed by a random sequence of phrases selected from set lists that describe a material, a site or situation, a light source and a category of inhabitants. One such quatrain inspired the name for the project and its many manifestations: “a house of dust, on open ground, lit by natural light, inhabited by friends and enemies”.

Organised by Katherine Carl, Maud Jacquin and Sébastien Pluot, the exhibition also includes other early computerized artworks and works using chance processes, assemblage, installations and various archival materials, including documentation of the actual House of Dust that Knowles built in Chelsea in 1968 as part of a Guggenheim Fellowship. The structure was later damaged by arson and subsequently transported, repaired, and installed at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) campus in Burbank, California, where the artist taught in the early 1970s.

At the opening reception for the show, Knowles conducted a performance of her “Newspaper Music” in which several students and members of the public read parts the daily news in varying languages and at varying pitches, gradually becoming louder and overlapping one another, to enthusiastic applause from the audience. Other events, planned in collaboration with the University’s doctoral students, will take place through the run of the exhibition.





Vin Grabill, Charlotte Moorman performs Num June Paik's TV Bra for Living Sculpture on the roof of her loft, 62 Pearl Street, New York, July 30, 1982 (Image: © Vin Grabill)

Meanwhile, [a related exhibition at NYU's Grey Art Gallery](#) focuses on the regular Nam June Paik collaborator and "topless cellist" Charlotte Moorman, who died in 1991. The career survey comprises interviews, photographs, rare footage from the avant-garde festival that she founded in 1963, and a film lent by Yoko Ono that shows Moorman performing Ono's Cut Piece (1964) in 1982 from the roof of her Manhattan loft after she was diagnosed with cancer. A Feast of Astonishments: Charlotte Moorman and the Avant-Garde, 1960s-1980s (until 10 December) travels from the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, which now owns the performer's archive.