

## **Play and Social Change**

**A comparison of the notion 'Play' in art movements of the 1960s and  
21st century culture and its impact on social change.**

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**Abstract:**

Looking at the popular culture of today, where opinions are shared online, creativity of consumers is asked for, full body interaction in videogames through the virtual reality is already a reality, whole new parameters for creativity and Play and social interaction are emerging. As we do not know what the social impact of those creative trends of today are and can't entirely foresee their possible developments, this paper evaluates the question of the role of Play and Art in social change from a historical point of view. Therefore, the terms of Play and Game is defined first in order to then undertake a study of the ideologies of 60's art movements such as Situationist International and Fluxus. The aim of this paper is to show that popular of the 21<sup>st</sup> century culture is immensely influenced by ideologies of those two art movements. Although the immersion of play into society has happened on multiple levels, the political goals of those art movements were not achieved. A last and concluding part offers a critical and personal evaluation of the place Play takes within the society of today.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

As Guy Debord, member of the Situationist International 1960's art movement, said: "in a world that *really* has been turned on its head, truth is a moment of falsehood." (Debord, 1967) Sixty years later, on January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 US President Trump's Spokeswoman defends his claims by corroborating them with "alternative facts". (Bradner, 2017) How have we come to this point of factual reality? Does this mean we can change and alter truth; the foundation of our religious and political beliefs? And if so, how long have we been offered 'alternative facts'? If we do live in a world where truth can come in different shades of truth, do we live in an alternative reality? What is easily observable is that our reality has changed since the 1960s. Our reality expands far beyond our physical reality as perceived through our senses. We see that, for instance, in the supermarket, when we pay a machine instead of a person. We are now way beyond the cinema entertainment.

However, this trend of change in factual basis of society is present, especially since a time where a candidate such as Donald Trump can win presidential elections through social media campaigns with loose connection with facts. The ambiguity between a progressive culture and a rather conservative and indoctrinated culture makes us rethink what the meaning of a society of creative citizens means. Our cosy society has pacified us, and it begs the question why do we seem so indifferent to the rampant atrocities so close to our doorstep? If not what else, this becomes even more of a paradox given that technology offers us full coverage of any event.

Inspired by this problematique, **this research paper analyses the development of the notion of Play respectively to its historical importance regarding social change until today.** In order to fully understand the importance of Play in our society, it is necessary to analyse the very essence of Play. What is it, and what is its purpose in human nature? What is the difference between Play and Game and how does it influence our world view? In a second instance, we need to take a step back in history to understand the position of Play in the field of art and the meaning of art in Society. Here I analyse the theories and artistic practices of the Situationist International (SI) and the Fluxus art movements. These will shed light not only on the role of Play in art but especially, the role of playful art on the idea of social change. In a third instance, I resume with a study of the creative participatory culture

today in which the problem noted by the 1960’s art movements will be reconsidered. What did we learn from the 1960’s art movements and where do we find its traits in our popular culture today? In the fourth and last part, the position of Play in our contemporary culture is assessed. Were SI and Fluxus right in their beliefs and did they succeed or are we turning in circles? And above all what is the position of the artists in the whole story of societal change?

In order to facilitate the research, I concentrate mainly on the viewpoint of western middle class<sup>1</sup> alongside analysing the global traits of popular culture. Furthermore, it needs to be noted that various assumptions and examples are retrieved from personal experiences and observations and therefore are not generalizable.

## **PART I: GAME/PLAY: Theories and definitions**

In order to understand the role of Play in art and social change, one has to first analyse the nature of the terms ‘Play’ and ‘Game’ and their relation to human nature. It is important to broadly define such complex terms as ‘Play’ and ‘Game’ as they seem to be consistencies in all stages in life. For example, dogs play with each other without hurting one another, children can play with a broom for hours, and adults play board games or team sports. Even in the everyday use of language one finds the term ‘Game’ in sayings such as *‘is this a game to you?’* or *‘Life is a Game’*. ‘Play’, on the other hand is often found in relation to other activities than the ones known as games. For instance, play is used frequently to describe a certain flexibility of a given, such as *‘playing with feelings’* or the *‘play of a steering wheel’*. It can also be used to describe arranging and rearranging something creatively, i.e. *the word-play* or *playing the piano* (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, pp.302-303). There are multiple more examples of the usage of the word ‘Play’ and ‘Game’ in our language of which all show the endless variety of interpretations and the depth in which these concepts are entrenched in our society. Therefore, the next section intends to highlight the underlying common ground of all those different meanings and their nuanced differences. In order to do

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<sup>1</sup> By western middle class, I mean the people who have all the basic needs covered to survive such as welfare and postgraduate education. Moreover, I speak from my own surrounding which is central Europe. As I cannot give empirical proof of my observations I rather concentrate on the culture I come from.

so, I chose to separate the two terms: Play and Game. First, the term Play is analysed by evaluating the taxonomy of Johan Huizinga eluding the difference between the English terminology of play and game and Huizinga's terms of 'Spel' and 'Ernst in het Spel' (Huizinga, 2015). Further, I define the term Game not only in contrast to Play but also in relation to it. Conclusively, these terms cannot be seen as mutually exclusive and indeed have to be seen in connection to each other.

## **PLAY**

Adding to the known defining terms of Homo sapiens<sup>2</sup> and Homo Faber<sup>3</sup>, the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga elaborated on the nature of humans by coining the term '*Homo Ludens*' – the playing human – in his most famous book with the same title first published in 1944.

In general, he defines Play accordingly:

"Play is a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious,' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner." (Huizinga, 2015, pp.22)

In his book, Huizinga analyses play in human culture. However, he also points out that play is not only part of human nature. Play can often be observed in the animal realm as well. How is it possible that for example a crow and a dog can play with each other although they are prey and predator? (Atomkraft69, 2013). They both have to know that they are not serious and need to agree to it both in order to secure the play. It shows that play does not have a direct reason for survival. It also means, on one hand that Play cannot have an exclusively rational, reflective purpose, as that

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<sup>2</sup> The thinking human

<sup>3</sup> The creating human

would make it proper to the humans. On the other hand, it also demonstrates that humans are not purely rational beings (Huizinga, 2015, pp.11).

Nevertheless, the human nature is marked by rationality and arguably dominated by it. It is certainly the power to reflect and to learn which made the human species evolve into the arguably dominant species today. But we come across a paradox: We can understand that babies and animals, who do not possess the capacities to reflect are engaging in play, but why is it that adults are also engaging in a seemingly purposeless and irrational activity? Huizinga explains that it is this very capacity to reflect, which enables us to analyse the different defining elements of Play. It will also give us some insight into the different forms of Play and the differences between Child play and Adult play. (p.12-14)

Four of his main defining categories are as following:

#### 1. Play is a temporary time zone

First important element of Play is, that it stands outside of the 'ordinary'. This is furthered by the fact it "can occur spontaneously and outside of clearly defined games", structures or conventions (Huizinga, 2015, p14). In order to totally immerse into a temporary world, one also has to step out of the ordinary concept of time and space. In this temporary time zone, it is possible to create situations outside of the rules set up by society.

It also offers the possibility for the players to identify with each other on an alternative level, one of a different temporal element. Just like the example of the crow and the dog, it creates a moment of empathy (Getsy, 2011, pp. xii-xiii) In other words, each player needs to understand the other players way of thinking and adjust to the imaginations in order to continue in the same story; apparently stepping out of themselves.

This process has a sequence. First of all, the players need to agree to the temporary situation and be conscious of the fact that it is not real. Second, they need to trust that all players are not turning it into a real situation. However, it does not mean, that the rules are changed in the real world or even that the players will feel empathy in the real world, it rather offers a safe zone to practice such outcomes or explore alternative options to existing structures. In the situation of children's Play, we can see that children, just like young animals play to practice for later real situations. Adults, on the

other hand, create games with clear boundaries that determine very specifically the alternate zone. These moments are quite distinguishably outside of the ordinary.

Sometimes, however, those moments are not clearly definable as they can happen even in the slightest moment. For example, we use language in many different playful ways. Let's say two people are fighting, not for fun but with true enmity. Then one uses sarcasm to highlight the absurdity of the situation. The other in contrast takes it as a serious comment and gets angrier. The first person, in a very brief fleeting moment used play in order to interrupt ways of acting. In return, this temporary moment was not play but very serious for the other person. So, the temporary time zone is not always detached from the ordinary time, it is rather a fluid flexible snake moving freely within all of those. It can be put outside of the real life and can be free of the rules and limitations but it can also alter reality or social relations.

## 2. Play is disinterested

Our ordinary world is ordered and all purposeful actions are quite defined. In other words, we do them with a clear purpose or goal. Naturally, we eat to survive, we have sex to reproduce, and we create a social structure to be able to live in peace. All those elements have a specific goal and are very much part of the ordinary and even have a quantifiable outcome. Play is a step outside of the ordinary and ignores the material function or structured thought process (Huizinga, 2015, p.15). For example, the pleasure we get from eating or sexual intercourse can be considered part of play as they do not fulfil the biological goal. They are defined by the mere pleasure in doing something for the sake of doing so.

Yet, this does not mean it has no purposeless. Play is, by its disinterestedness, very consciously the contrary to the interested actions. This incites that play has to be fun or rather needs to be 'un-serious' in order to secure the disinterestedness (Huizinga, 1949, p.09).

As soon as it does become quantifiable such as the possibility of winning or losing, it is not mere play anymore. What Huizinga calls 'rituals' is therefore a very tricky form of Play (p.8). According to me, once a play is played and repeated in the exact same

way, it cannot be called play anymore but enter the realm of the symbols of culture. It is stripped off of its flexibility and furthermore cannot be called Play anymore.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. "Play is free, it is in fact Freedom"

In order for Play to be disinterested, another quality needs to be added which is the concept of freedom. Here, freedom needs to be considered in a broader sense than of a determinism point of view. It is evident that play cannot exist outside of set boundaries; such as time, space, and -above all- the essential destiny of the human being (die Bestimmung des Menschen). However, within these boundaries, Play in itself is Free. Especially Child Play is free as it does not yet have the responsibilities towards its own life that an adult has. A child with parents, who create a protective shell around it, will be able to explore freely and play freely.

For adults, play becomes serious and therefore rather restricted in its range of possibilities. Adults, who are responsible for their own survival and life, will also be the ones who define to what extent their Play is free as they create the bubble themselves. This might seem like a cage for Play, however it can be seen as another type of freedom. It is the freedom of choice, not only to enter into a play situation, to follow rules but even to define them. Furthermore, Adult Play should also possess the potential to break or question the boundaries or rules; it should be free enough to be independent of conventions and rules. (Huizinga, 2015, pp.16)

### 4. Play creates order, it is order

Although play happens outside of the ordinary space and time, it does not mean that play is without rules and entirely oblivious to the world. Play is always linked to some guiding mechanisms surrounding the play. We can never in any situation be free of our environment, our roots, or our history. Those are all defining elements for the shape and form of Play to encompass.

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<sup>4</sup> Although some rituals are playful or require the participants to have disinterested motives, the fact that it is a ritual or tradition goes against the idea of disinterestedness. We can take a Carnival as an example. The fact that it has a certain setting which allows unserious behaviour makes it a form of playground in which the adult children can be free. The setting/playground is the ruled part, what I would call game, and whatever happens within those boundaries can be called play. However, the orchestrated 'fools' who perform during these happenings are more of a re-enactment of play rather than play itself as it does not occur spontaneously but has been choreographed beforehand. Nevertheless, those orchestrated events can generate an atmosphere of play and therefore facilitate its true occurrence.

Furthermore, Play can be seen as the driving force to create order. It is the force, which moves within the set rules and thus becomes the medium to evaluate and re-evaluate harmony. Play is the element which makes the distinction between reality and the virtual, between true and false, or even between serious and non-serious. Play is basically the tension in search for harmony. (Huizinga, 2015, pp.19)

Susan Laxton dives into a comparison between this strive for harmony and Kant's philosophy of aesthetics. Play and the aesthetic experience are both non-functional and disinterested. Both are unstable and rather a mean than an end within the person experiencing it. Laxton describes it in the following terms:

“Play, in Kant, is finally a unifying trope; it describes activity undertaken for its own sake, protected within a field bounded in space and time. Philosophically, it is a model that establishes a number of binary oppositions for both play and art: pleasure against work; freedom against utility, formal gestalt made distinct from temporal activity.”<sup>5</sup> (2011, p.6)

In Friedrich Schiller's terms: ‘der Mensch soll mit der Schönheit nur spielen, und er soll nur mit der Schönheit spielen’<sup>6</sup> (Schiller, 1795, p.88) which points out that there is a certain interdependence between the search for harmony, aesthetics or perfection and the very activity of play and thus also inherent to the arts.

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After summarising the core concept of Huizinga's conception of Play, I would like to develop my understanding of the importance of Play in the learning process. Schiller wrote in his letters about aesthetic education (ästetische Erziehung) ‘der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Worts Mensch ist, und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt’ (Schiller, 1795, p.88)<sup>7</sup>. Schiller expressed that Play is indeed a fundamental

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<sup>6</sup> “With beauty man shall *only play*, and it is with *beauty only* that he shall play” (Getsy, 2011, p.6)

<sup>7</sup> Man only plays when he is in the fullest sense of the word a human being, and he is only human when he plays.

part of the very human nature and cannot only be reserved to childhood but is a need throughout life.

Reflecting on Schiller it can be said that when humans are born, just like any other species, the goal is to be raised to be responsible adults so that they can bear their own children and do the same. Humans nowadays live in a globalised society where their responsibilities are not only towards family and friends but towards the whole global community, counting the political, social and economic community.

Children however do not yet have to live up to those responsibilities as they are not yet considered functioning parts of the society. They are given a free space surrounded by rules given by the parents within which they can freely explore. It is the way adults make a fence around the playground so that children can be playing without accidentally running on the street where other, more severe rules could interfere with their play. This however does not mean that children do not have any rules within the safe zone. On the contrary, Play exhibits order and an opportunity to make rules independent from imposed day-to-day rules from society or adults. For example, recently I was observing two 10 year olds play around in the bitter cold and subdued architectural construction in our school's patio. The patio mainly consists of a grey square platform with grey square pillars and square tiles. They paraded like a marching band, generating rhythmic sounds that echoed in the huge space. They found joy in generating these sounds. Then they marched behind each other and started following the lines on the ground. One said "let's follow the lines and you follow me but we are not allowed to look back". In other words, these two boys explored the physical capacities of such a space, and appropriated them. Within their play, they recognised the inherent structures of the building and appropriated them and created new rules for the use of such an otherwise useless space. It made me realise that children are only free of rules in order to experience and question the existing rules (even if they are just architectural) and later to create new ones.



Play is not just an entertainment or un-serious. In contrary, “The inferiority of play is continually being offset by the corresponding superiority of its seriousness.” (Huizinga, 1949, p.8). Also Children’s Play is never pointless. In fact, Play is an important part of learning and therein lays its seriousness. Children learn how their environment works and what their position within the structures is. They need the alternate reality in order to have a free space for exploration and to try out all possibilities. They furthermore, need the free space – in a sense I also mean free space from the otherwise biased reality - to be free in imagining, using the ‘wrong’ objects for the ‘wrong’ functions in order to make up all those possibilities without actually living them (Winnicott, 2011, p. XIV-XV). Suddenly a block of wood becomes a telephone. So to say, they are literally playing around with reality.

Unfortunately, in a world where humanity praises itself with great intellect, children are confronted with the ‘reality’ as soon as possible. The ‘freedom’ within play is more and more determined by designs. Their dolls look like people, their kitchens look like kitchens and they use computers to navigate through imaginary worlds previously designed especially for them.

Joseph Chilton Pearce argues that the child is only learning when playing. In contrast to what he calls ‘conditioning’ as well as ‘behaviour modification’ playing is learning from within the child and through the child (Pearce, 2011). Sentences from the adults such as “do not climb up that tree”, conditions the child to be careful with heights because they are dangerous. Real learning about the danger of heights would be to climb up and find oneself dizzy or impressed or even falling down. This kind of learning is essential for children to define themselves from the rest of the world. They need to learn that they are not the world but that they are part of it and therefore also have impact on their surrounding just like the surrounding has on them.

The adults on the other hand are more conditioned and fixed onto their determination. They have responsibilities and cannot get lost in imaginary worlds all day. Where Children can be considered free in their way of playing, adults can be seen as free in the sense they have the freedom of being their own self, detached from the rest of the world. They have the freedom to move, take choices. Knowledge offers them freedom within society. The more you know, the more you are independent from the rest of society. So we think. Plus, all that adults do is in one way or another linked to their intellect and also their big memory database. When it comes to learning

and adults, it is not the fact that they have too much knowledge or that they cannot switch off their intellect which makes them inflexible to learn. In my opinion it is that they think there is nothing to be learned which is not intellectual. Or even, that anything which can be learned through play is not worth learning or useless.

Thomas S. Henricks (2015) states that

“play . . . celebrates people’s abilities to craft their own responses to circumstances free from interference . . . [and] is connected intimately to the project of human freedom” (p. 221) and thus is “a project of self-realization” (p. 226).

As the play situations continue to arise in adulthood, we can state that this self-realisation project is a continuous enterprise. I would even dare to claim that the fact that self-realisation is something humans do all their life, it means that they are free in their ‘*Bestimmung*’ (determination). It is thus extremely important also for adults to play, in pursuit of exploring their freedom and their possibilities. Adults, who are sure of their self-realization process to have completed, will stay the same throughout their lives and will also not be able to assess their surrounding in any other way than their own.

## **GAME**

It is important to note at this stage that Huizinga’s book *Homo Ludens* was originally written in Dutch and therefore does not include the distinction between Play and Game. He instead talks about ‘*Ernst van Spel*’ which literally means the ‘seriousness’ of play. Here we use the term ‘Game’ in order to make a distinction. In this research, Game is distinguishable from play on the attributed strictness of the rules that are set in place from outside the individual. It is of course without ignoring the interdependency of both that this research tries to define them more or less individually.

Concerning the definition of Game, we shall have a look into the definition of Game from a game design point of view as it deals with the structuring of play. Game designers Salen & Zimmerman (2004) define game in their book *Rules of Play* as part of the broader family of ludic activities which is the family of all playful elements in life.

More specifically, contrary to ‘non-games’, “games have a goal and a quantifiable outcome.” (p.307)

What I would consider the Play within Game is denominated by them as “Game play”: “Game play is the formalised interaction that occurs when players follow the rules of a game and they experience its system through play.” (p.303) Thus, established rules define to what extent play can occur compared to children’s play, where the rules are developed throughout play and can be rearranged according to the needs.

Half a century earlier, the anthropologist Roger Caillois, on his behalf, reacted to Huizinga’s *Homo Ludens* and intended to develop a more englobing taxonomy of the complex relation between Play and Game. (Getsy, 2011, xi). He divides the ludic activities in four vertical categories (fig.1) – Agôn, Alea, Mimicry and Ilinx – which distinguish between different defining elements. Two additional categories Paidá and Ludus form levels of order. While Paidá represents the free play and Ludus represents the ‘designed’ form of play, this is what I call Game. The vertical defining elements Mimicry and Ilinx can be assigned to the category of Play while Agôn and Alea are

	<b>Paidá</b>	<b>Ludus</b>
<b>Agôn</b> (Competition)	Unregulated athletics (foot racing, wrestling)	Boxing, Billiards, Fencing, Checkers, Football, Chess
<b>Alea</b> (Chance)	Counting-out rhymes	Betting, Roulette, Lotteries
<b>Mimicry</b> (Simulation)	Children’s initiations, masks, disguises	Theater, spectacles in general
<b>Ilinx</b> (Vertigo)	Children “whirling,” Horseback riding, Waltzing	Skiing, Mountain climbing, Tightrope walking

*Examples taken from Man, Play, and Games*

*Figure 1 Salen & Zimmerman page 308*

assigned to the category of Game. Thus, this taxonomy offers many crossovers between play and game (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, p.307).

However, neither of those categories seems to cover the infinitely vast library of possibilities within the realm of play and game. By trying to define and grasp the different ways of playing, they seem lacking in explain the fine line between the real and the non-real. As a vast part of Play and Game happens in our minds, it is hard to

put a finger on the differences. The magic of play lies within its fluidity and cannot be ordered in a few defining categories. Even Caillois taxonomy is too reduced as some play forms can be play and game at the same time or as explained in the example of fighting, sometimes even is both serious and non-serious at the same time. (Getsy, 2011, xi) What then is the exact problem with a rigid taxonomy?

Firstly, Game and Play are not mutually exclusive. They are interdependent. As noted above, neither Play nor Game can exist outside of structures, whether it is physical or mental or social. We live on earth, everything is made out of elements, atoms, etc and, thus, they are also present while playing. Game as well as Play always happens within special given space, a formatted area. Space exists wherever we are. Sometimes, space can be altered to facilitate play but sometimes space also becomes the play. Within the Game design theories, Play cannot be entirely free as Play is only 'free movement within a more rigid structure' such as space or a system's structure. Three categories such as *game play*, *ludic activity*, and *being playful* all find their place within this very loose definition. In the first category, Play can only occur through very limited rearranging and overcoming rules set up by the game. The second, which is activities without any specific goal but to engage in the activity itself, such as dance or bouncing a ball, stands freer but again are limited by certain given natural structures, trying to overcome them. *Being playful* means an occurrence not restricted to specific spatial or timely structures but nonetheless to important social or language boundaries. (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, p.304)

For example, when a child picks up a shoe and imitates a telephone call, it is creating rules while playing. Although these rules are ever-changing, the shoe can become a helicopter in the next second. They exist and define Game even from within Play. Their arrival during play shows a constant flux between free Play and organised Game. Respectively, this flux can be observed within games with rigid rules as well. For instance, when a football player pretends to be incredibly hurt for his own benefit, or another scores an own goal. These examples can be considered Play within Game, as they happen outside of the ordinary and thus are a re-evaluation of the legitimacy of rules.

Furthermore, when, for example a player entirely ignores the set of rules established beforehand and goes entirely anarchistic on the game, he then did not seek

Play within Game but beyond. It is especially that kind of play which is appealing to this research. When I made the game 'Train' lately, I had to ask myself the question, whether or not I should give clear advice on the rules behind the game, it became clear that even the slightest sign was already a *rule*. In the game 'Train' all you get is a train with four wagons, each of a different colour and different dots with matching colours scattered on top of the game board. Rules can be imagined without them being explained. During the try-out, the rules were unexpectedly invented on the go, or even non-existent. The player was able to ignore any rules if he felt free enough and find joy in exactly that.



*Figure 2: Own work, "Train" 2017*

Secondly, as explained above, it is only because of our mind that we can become conscious of our playful actions. This process of making play conscious is necessary for it to have an impact on our self-realization project. But sometimes, there are situations where games/plays are happening unconsciously. They are serious and free, but simultaneously their consequences are not consciously evaluated. For example, all social plays, such as flirtations, jealousy, manipulation of truth, fights, group dynamics, gardening, and even just walking around town holding the head high are all sort of alterations of seriousness but happen within rules proper to our species.

Thirdly, there is a vast historical importance with Play and Game in culture. Plays are created at a certain moment and space after which it is saved in a unspoken archive of plays that can be replayed again and again. As of this moment it becomes culture. When Play repeats each with the exact same rules and outcomes, they are so to say ordered. They become traditions or rituals as Huizinga calls them. They enter the

realm of the culture, the history of a place, so they become important. I think as soon as games acquire historical importance, so to say it happens within a timeframe, it becomes Game. Play can only exist during the advancing time. It is a momentary thing. The result in the sense that there are traces or 'recipes' left behind, are not Play anymore.

The only time, I would consider Play to be acting in Game is when Play is transforming the rules of a game for good. This so called 'transformative Play' is a good example of how play cannot be fixed. When a game's rules are changed permanently through Play, the game after the transformation is still a game. Play is the action of transforming them, not the result. Nevertheless, not all play is transforming the rules, but it always possesses the potential of transforming them. (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, pp. 311)

## **Conclusion PART I**

All in all, Play can be considered as part of the human nature and the human as Homo Ludens. According to the definitions of Huizinga and Caillois, Play can be seen as a disinterested activity undertaken by humans in times of leisure free from the rules and responsibilities of the society. Game in return is the structure which defines the movement within whether the structure is physical or not. Within those rules, freedom in play is reduced to the parameters established by the players. Those definitions however are intersecting and even interdependent. Game with rules is the status quo and Play is the medium to evaluate and re-evaluate those rules. Consequently, Play is what makes the rules and thus makes Game.

We can say, Play including Game is an essential role in the formation of our worldview, not only to the children but throughout life. It thus stands to reason that Play has an essential role in the human nature of seeking harmony and order within the human community but also seeking freedom within it. As noted in the chapter above, play and the aesthetic experience and, thus, the whole art world are intimately linked. And if Play and the structuring of society are interdependent, what then, is the role of Play in social change? Can art be a catalyst of those ideas?



Figure 3 : the interdependency

## **PART II: art in the 1960s**

One could say, artists have not only always been the symbols of *free players* within an otherwise serious ordered world; they have also always been the catalysts of society. If they did not concentrate to stretch the rules within art itself, they either reacted on socio-political realities in a representative way, or they would be part of a political system as for example in terms of propaganda. However, until and entering the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of art enjoyed the status of the unserious play outside the political sphere. This isolated place within society offered art quite a lot of freedom to move within the parameters offered by society but would never be an active part of social change. It was not until the interwar period, that the artists started to make politically engaged art. They started to think about questions like: how could the artists take advantage of this status to incite changes within society? And if they did, what place would art take within society?

For the sake of this research, two leftist art movements of the 1960's are select because they are particularly interesting for our subject as they both promoted Play as a key method for social change. On one hand, the Situationist International were offering a firm theoretical base about the separation between art and everyday life, and developed tactics on how to implement the method of play in changes towards a more enlightened society. On the other, Fluxus which was a sister movement of the SI, had a more practical approach onto the problem which will offer a different perspective to this research. Both, the SI and Fluxus will help to illustrate how play and art can shake up the people's world view and create awareness about their position within it. First, I will analyse the Situationist Internationale's conception of political and social change and the role of art and play within it. Then I'll analyse Fluxus more practical response to SI's (Situationist Internationale) theoretical approach.

## **SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL**

The *Internationale Situationiste* was an international group of avant-garde artists who in 1957 initially formed an art collective with Asger Jorn as its founder. Initially, they were mainly concerned with the idea of quality or conservatism in the art world or other art related problems. Only in 1962, after contradictions at their international conferences, the SI has separated from less political collectives and moved towards a politically engaged phase (Menjoulet, 2016).

After their break towards a more political engagement, the SI, defined the socio-political problems of their time from which they were to develop their artistic conviction. The rather self-proclaimed leader of the group Guy Debord coined the society as “la société du spectacle” (Debord, 1973, 00:03:30). The society of spectacle is a society where all aspects of life are commodified. Not only does it underline the Marxist criticism of capitalism where the producers are alienated from the products, it also stretches the development of the same idea into the social life. According to them, the social commodification, where ‘spectators’ are separated from each other, was done through the society of images. Consumption and individualism had become a mode of life universally accepted as the motto to life by. The spectacle had become the medium as well as the goal all at once. It became the “instrument of unification” (00:03:42). As an example for free time designed for consumption, Sports can be seen as symbols of play. But these temporary illusions of leisure had a fixed place within the production system. It would serve to steer people back into their usual places (Contribution to a, 1958). Games, such as football are games with fixed rules and predetermined winner-loser outcome. They trigger a longing for satisfaction, a quantitatively measurable outcome. Although it is, what Huizinga called, placed outside of the ordinary, it feels like real achievement and therefore represents a will passive, pathetic consumption drive, which in return of giving temporal satisfaction demands more. Such systems of leisure leave little room for creativity and serve as tools to create a consumer on multiple levels (Debord, 1973).

In the Situationist Manifesto, written in 1960, the main ideas and goals were defined. In the following section, I will elaborate on the most important parts of the manifesto in order to highlight the importance of Play and Art in social change. Although the SI

became influential through their theoretical development after their separation in 1962, these ideas and goals cannot be explained without the prior artistic periods.

#### Against the spectacle:

In the spectacle society, people are not only provided with the needs of their everyday lives, but also with their needs in free time. As the consumer is provided with the illusion of leisure and in consequence with a 'false consciousness', boredom and creativity are the enemies of citizen control.

It is, therefore, the arts, which could generate change if it engaged in a 'leap of a utopian revolutionary art to an experimental revolutionary art' (Debord, 1958, para. 3). While the utopian revolutionary art is only another alternative spectacle for a somewhat more "enlightened" audience, the experimental revolutionary art should be entirely immersed from all domains of society. It would transcend mystification of an unachievable goal and call for total participation. The artistic work of SI thus should not be of an artistic nature as in the sense of their ancestors of the Avant Garde, but the immergence of creativity in a revolutionary political praxis (Situationist Manifesto, 1960).

#### Against preserved art:

Consequently, if the consumption of leisure was to be transformed into consumption of creation of leisure, conservation of art would become superfluous. Art, which in classical terms is the glorified representation of human creativity, should become the method of building life and not consuming it. (Debord, 1958, para. 2) For example, as a comment on the stagnate, conservative approach to art, Asger Jorn painted over old paintings. These paintings became symbols of what the Situationists called 'Le Détournement' which was "the integration of present or past artistic productions into a superior construction of a milieu." (Definitions, 1958). These objects represented the idea of history being a lively communal dialog on values and ethics. Nevertheless, they only served to stress that old values were replaced by new ones. What other Situationists intended was an entire Détournement of culture and our general belief in originality and authorship.

Guy Debord said "it is not the negation of the style but it is the style of negation" which had to be appropriated (desirante, 2012). In other words, Détournement is the language of the anti-ideology and by speaking a new language and reevaluating the old one; one can create an irrefutable new society.

Hence, the culture of conservative, consumerist, and liberalist society dictates a top down hierarchy of property, not just of goods but also ideas. Art, for its part, becomes a product communicating an idea to the viewer. Although the viewer has freedom in the interpretation of it, the art work does not generate much dialogue and ends at the interpretation in the viewers mind. In order to break this pattern, as stated above, art should find the voice of revolution by being an art of dialog and interaction and finally develop towards an idea of culture as common good.

#### Against unilateral art:

Through this 'language' they wanted to fight the top down relation to creativity. In contrast to this unilateral art, the SI promoted the idea of creating situations instead of situationist 'work'. A situation is "a moment of life concretely and deliberately constructed by the collective organization of a unitary ambiance and a game of events."<sup>8</sup> More so,

"at a higher stage, everyone will become an artist, i.e., inseparably a producer-consumer of total culture creation, which will help the rapid dissolution of the linear criteria of novelty. Everyone will be a situationist so to speak, with a multidimensional inflation of tendencies, experiences, or radically different schools" (Situationist Manifesto, 1960)

Constant Nieuwenhuys, for instance, developed a utopian city called 'New Babylon' in which different daily occupations found their place in different parts of the city. It would be a city where there was plenty of room for the citizen to be creative and playful. New Babylon was specifically conceived as a detailed plan for an alternative society. If it was put into place, the city would make artists out of every citizen. (Nieuwenhuys, 1997).

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<sup>8</sup> Free usage of source

Moreover, their intention to make creative citizens asked for playful citizens. However, “Due to its marginal existence in relation to the oppressive reality of work, play is often regarded as fictitious.” (Contribution to a, 1958). Therefore, the playful action was a tool to make the distinction between reality and illusion. It would create awareness about the illusionary freedom of the ordered society and the actual freedom of situationist creative society. An example, such as New Babylon of Constant Nieuwenhuys, offered all the possibilities for the playful human to develop into conscious citizen who instead of consuming reality would create it.

#### Against particularized art:

As explained above, SI strongly believed that our everyday life was ordered into the smallest detail. One could even say that life was a game, and the rules were made by the system. The means of production would not be alone in determining the everyday routine, but also physical disposal could be seen as restrictions to our free movement. Besides obvious examples such as the Berlin Wall, erected in 1961 or the later equivalent between Israel and Palestine, even the most basic and impartial architecture are literally determining our movement within a city. The SI claimed that “from a **derive** point of view cities have psycho-geographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones” (Debord, 1956). Architecture thus is not only supporting the idea of private property which alternate free movement, it is also highly conservative as it always refers to the past. Once it is built it is finished and fixed in history, without any movement or flexibility (ibid). Therefore they encouraged citizens to refute even the smallest controlling instance and drift instead. What they coined as ‘*dérive*’ (drift) was an exercise of consciously taking different routes. In Constant’s New Babylon, to be the rule, not the exception; in fact New Babylon was supposed to be named “*Dériville*” (drift city) (Nieuwenhuys, 2001).

## **FLUXUS**

Fluxus, another daughter movement to Dada, and sister movement to Situationist International, was equally revolutionary. It came about in times of mass production and political confusion. The Manifest of the Fluxus movement is distinctively smaller than the one of Situationist International. Both Manifestos are equally representative for their respective self-appointed leaders. Guy Debord was a complicated radical intellectual, whereas the George Maciunas was a goof ball troublemaker with a funny laugh (Guillaume, 1995). Although both movements were basically against 'bourgeois sickness' or 'the spectacle', they had fundamentally different approaches towards the problem. In the interview between William Woods (1977) and George Maciunas, the latter when asked what Fluxus was, answered "was a toilet flush." It means nothing but also everything. 'Fluxus' essentially means a flow, a movement or even a fusion of metals and thus represents their art practice. Just like the SI, they wanted art to be freed from its tides within the capitalist system" (Woods, 1977, clip 8).

"PURGE the world of dead art, imitation, artificial art, abstract illusionistic art, mathematical art" (Meciunas, 1963).:

Meciunas wrote in the Manifest of Fluxus. Just like the SI, the Fluxus were fundamentally against the blind consumerism and the immovable, unspoken 'rules' within art. Art needed to be freed from it all, towards "fluidity" in art-making and flexibility of quality. Fluxus, maybe even more than the Situationist Internationale, stayed close to the idea of play in artistic creation in order to trigger an open mind. The Situationists were occupied rather with the theoretical part of how they could implement playful elements in everyday life.

Fluxus' free attitude towards art springs from the inter war art movements such as anti-art and dada. Marcel Duchamp in particular stood as the greatest influence of Fluxus. Duchamp has introduced the art world with breaking concepts by *playing* around with them. He would take a concept or a "truth", playfully manipulate it and by doing so, question the very definition of it. For example he would drop a meter of string and use the shape the string left behind (Smith, 2011, p.119). He was radically

intent on playing and was consistent in practicing it, not only with specific concepts but the whole art world itself. Just like the children who freely interpreted the structures on the ground for their own game, or the high school student who challenges the teacher with impossible questions, he would question the very legitimacy of art by using creation in a different way to tradition.

As art is representative of society's health, Fluxus, comparable to SI, saw art as a method to provoke social change from within. However, the Fluxus artists concentrated on the art world itself with the political movements to be secondary or additional. They came in line with Dada who thought of using the art world as a platform to shake the people out of their ordinary world. They are often known as the trouble makers with slap stick humor who shock with their scandalous works which turn rules upside down. However, they should not be taken lightly and unserious. They had a specific underlying meaning and attention was as political and Cosmo theoretic as the intentions of the SI. It is the performative, interactive and even situational nature which makes their work intrinsically social and political often questioning the very meaning of life (Popper, 1975, p.190). Ernesto L. Francalanci, professor at the Academy of Arts in Venice stated that the art that appropriates qualities of Game or Play does not need additional political intentions.

„Political intention of art is already evident when the art has a tendency to manifest itself in activities involving the collectivity, activities which refer to a scale sufficiently large to take into account not merely the values of intrinsic beauty and precision but also functional characteristic on the environmental and sociological levels. Only in these circumstances can it be proved that the art object creates, as Marx held, a public sensitive to art and, in the second place, capable in addition of aesthetic pleasure” (Popper, 1975, p.181).

Therefore, it is interesting to analyse how Fluxus used Play in art to make a socio-political statement and eventually in view of creating social change. I have classified the Fluxus mind-set and work into several instances, which can all be seen as steps towards an enlightened society where everybody is an artist. At first instance, they point out the elements in society like the hyper rationalization, consumerism, etc. by

caricaturizing them or flipping them upside down with their gag like humour. Second, they set examples as artists and individuals in society by totally incarnating the Fluxus ideas. And in a third and last instance, they offer concrete examples to the general public of how to participate in the world with Fluxus ideas. All those elements are ways to use art to promulgate ideas of play and creativity to the public, with the goal of making everybody an artist, or every artist an enlightened citizen.

First, as described by the SI and Fluxus, Society is ailing with distinctions: all the different elements of Society such as the consumer, the rationalization of communal living, strict rules in art or games and society. Therefore, Fluxus stands for a dynamic tide within all elements in society, against a rigid separation of art, politics, economics, citizens, products. They wanted people to be shaken out of their seats, make them change perspective. Therefore, they used a lot of slapstick or gag-like humour to ridicule the at that time current way of living.

Fluxus artists played a lot with the idea of commodity. They, for instance, emptied perfume bottles and filled them with water. Then they intended to sell them, ridiculing not only the relationship between the price and the value of commodities but the very consumerist behaviour of people (Woods, 1977). Also, human waste was a popular way to depict the 'Flux' or 'purged-rather-than-crafted' art criticizing the concepts of value in the art market. James Riddle, a Fluxus artist, urinated into bottles and intended to sell them at Fluxfest 1965 (Young, 2010). Piero Manzoni, another, not exclusively Fluxus artist was an equally provocative artist with his 30 grams of his excrements 'Merda d'artista'. His work was sold for \$33,6 USD, which was the exact price of gold in 1961 (Manzoni, 1961). More than ever, today, his work has become representative for his criticism of consumerist society and the art market with the latest purchase of a can for €124,000 in 2007 (Le, 2016).

Furthermore, the Fluxus also condemned 'dead art', 'abstract art', and 'mathematical art'. However, art was only a representation of the 'bourgeois sickness' reigning everyday life. Every little aspect of life was codified, arranged and ruled. Science tells us how to be healthy and happy, politics tell us how to be safe and happy, and economics tell us how to be rich and happy. They all dictate rules on how to live life although nobody knows who makes them.

As a reaction to these realities, they would promote the element of chance as a counter element to rationalization. While everybody tries to control life into the smallest detail, one quickly forgets that chance has generated some of the most revolutionary findings creating the world we live in today. Without Chance, our genes would not have become what they are today. If not for chance, we would neither have penicillin nor x-rays.

Chance, or space for mistakes, is a crucial element of creation. The Fluxus artists used chance precisely for that same reason. It was the chance element which made their work so playful. Stanley Brown for example, used the idea of measurement and expropriated it resulting in his own measurement scheme featuring the 'Brown Foot', the 'Brown Step' or even the 'Brown Cubit'. With these works he commented on our way of defining space that our conception of measurements, which we take for granted and as a natural rule, in fact is a social construct for the means of the facilitation of global communication.<sup>9</sup>

It was not only the creation of artworks, which was influenced by chance. It was the whole group of Fluxus artists who found each other by chance and even throughout the years left a lot of space for unpredicted things to happen. They often planned their happenings but they never turned out the way they were supposed to. As for example in Dick Higgin's Constellation No 4, performed in multiple cities in the world. In this performance, each of the artists was allowed to choose the sound they could make until all were done and the piece was ended. Although the cadre of the performance was planned, it was the very outcome, which was unique and exhausted at that very instance and therefore became the most important part. (Friedman, 1998, p.6).

Although Fluxus artists were seeking for the space in between, such as chance or mistake, their work acknowledge the necessity of rules and they served them to seek the in-between space and break them. Just like the SI stated, they saw the games people play as mere illusionistic temporary timeframes within the ordinary world. Indeed, according to Huizinga, in earlier cultures of the Middle Ages or the Greek, playing sports were still linked to some sort of triviality. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century then,

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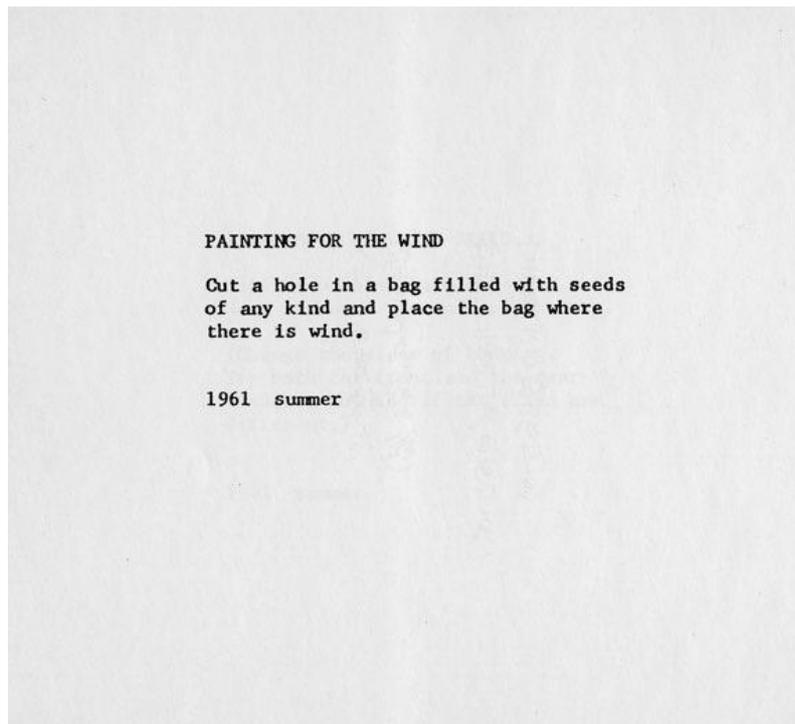
<sup>9</sup> In the exhibition of *Epur si Muove* at MUDAM (2015) in Luxembourg, scientific objects were exhibited next to artistic reactions on the same themes. In the room of measurements you find the first meter ever defined and next to others also a work of Brown indicating the universal meter next to his own 'brown-meter' which consisted of metal bars in the respective lengths

sports became more and more serious and left less room for trivial play forms (Huizinga, 2015, p.213). The modern sports in Huizinga's view have very little to do with the culture forming anymore. The community binding is the underlying reason within the element of sport. It defends the role of national or regional identity formation which can have a strong impact in times where military service is not an obligation anymore in the west. David Van Reybrouck (2010), an anthropologist who had written his most famous book *Congo*, even underlines that the introduction of football in Congo was of a political reason. Football was introduced to distract from the imperialistic wrongdoings in the hope of immersing them into the Belgian culture. Unfortunately, it ended up enforcing regional pride and thus contributing to the later segregation of a previously homogenous and mostly peaceful people.

In order to widen this relationship between object, rules and play, Fluxus artists playfully took away the function of those objects. For example, they would put holes in ping pong rackets or they would invite people to play football on stilts, run on grass with roller skates. Panamarenko, whose artistic works, was loosely linked to Fluxus, made a beautiful attempt to overcome the very rule of physics determining our relationship to space as a rule. He made shoes with which he could walk up the wall or even the ceiling (Panamarenko, 1966-1967).

In following an interim state made can be made if we look at art as the catalyst of society, it is not farfetched to think that the art world has predefining rules on what is art and who is allowed to make art. John Cage, turned the whole concept of Music upside down when he made his 4'33 minutes of silence. In the end, it was not by taking away the sound of instruments, that the room was filled with silence or non-music. In contrary, it was going to affirm the music we were missing, while paying attention to the sounds of the instruments. I would even dare to say that it affirmed the idea of the possible: art, play or creativity. (Hochberg, 2010).

Second, instead of just representing their ideas in objects the way many generations of artists have done so before, many Fluxus artists entirely personified those different elements of theory. It is of course important to note, that Fluxus did not have such a strict definition of the movement as the SI did. It was more a combination of people who shared thoughts. Their incarnation of it changed from artist to artist. In my eyes,



*Figure 4: Yoko Ono*

Stanley Brown for instance was utterly against putting his name underneath his works or he would not want anyone to write about his work nor for himself to be photographed. Robert Filliou is another example of an artist who entirely lived the Fluxus ideas. For a long time, he would be underestimated because he considered everything in life to be art. He said: "art is what makes life more interesting than art" (ARTtube, 2016). In his sense, art is not a pedestal on which one can show a transcendent idea of originality, but that art is a method to live, to make life meaningful or interesting. When there is a separation between art and life, art becomes a static element outside of life and is therefore dead. Being inspired by Zen Buddhism, he claimed the act of doing nothing to be the ultimate secret of permanent creation. It comes in line with the idea of play in terms of the activity of non-sense. A bored child will play; it will freely create to fill the gap of bored time. However in a society of permanent production, there is little room for creation, let alone for doing nothing. Therefore, according to Filliou, art should become a philosophy according to which one should live. (ARTtube, 2016).

Third, the Fluxus artists, instead of letting the audience entirely loose and asking them to have entire creative freedom, they offered a range of exercises that people were able to reproduce again and again. They not only introduced the audience with their playful way of thinking, they also managed to introduce the world with art works, which were not restricted to a time nor space. Some of their happenings, for instance, were already reproduced with different outcomes multiple times around the world. More so, their simple and fun instructions made it easy for people to do it at home (fig.4) and thus became timeless.

This way of working implies a certain compromise intrinsic to authorship and very much come in line with the idea of *Derive* by the SI. Georg Brecht or Yoko Ono made boxes with mind exercises like riddles as element of humor comparable to surrealist boxes in different sizes. The difference between those exercises and other social or board games, they would not presuppose a winning situation. People were invited to do these exercises without any other intention or interest other than mere Play (Woods, 1977).

A sister group of artist named GRAV had a similar practice intending “complete abandonment of all control by the artist after the choice of the basic elements: a few props (artistic ‘utensils’), a particular location for the ‘action’ and perhaps the time of the action and its limits of duration. In the exhibition in Schunck “*Spielerei*” where mostly GRAV art pieces were represented, I had noted that the limits within the spectator can be creative are very limited and concentrate on the borders of the physical object. It was mostly an ‘activation’ role the spectator was taking in. The ‘puzzle-like’ art pieces were freer in creation, in the same line as *Tangram*, which means that there are a lot of combinations possible but limited by the objects physiology (Popper, 1975, p.182)

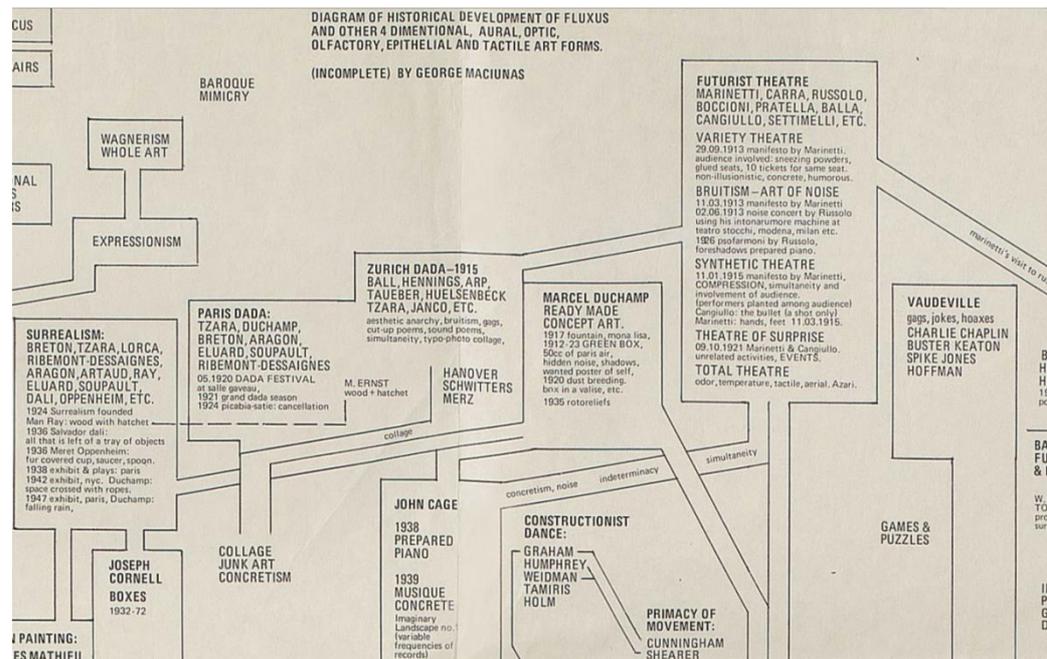


Figure 5: detail of diagram by Maciunas (Moma, n.d.)

## Conclusion PART II

The selected pieces of Fluxus and SI pieces cited in this chapter incite challenges or assignments. These in turn are predetermined by the artist with the goal to invite the participator to step into another perspective on the social structures. Hence, both art movements were ground-breaking in their world view and the idea of what the role of the arts was.

Both SI and Fluxus attempted to introduce the world to the idea of collectivity; Art's impact stretched the importance of the communal aspect, in art as well as in society. Their importance can be seen in what way they have influenced people today. Following with this, another aspect, arguably the most interesting part of those movements, was the interpersonal communal events. It was their lives which made their art work important to today's society. Unfortunately, the art world has fixed them into history and commodified their art works by virtue of how distinguishable their names are. It is important to say that, no matter how important their ideas were, they stayed stuck in a system rather than fundamentally changing it. And here again, a reference to children! When an adolescent starts rebelling against concepts and ethics, truths taught by their parents previously accepted, the chance that it is sporadic and passing in nature is high. It is rare that, when the economic reality hits the young adult,

he/she will continue his or her utopian view rather than becoming 'realistic' and 'getting their act together'.

Concluding, a thought on why such movements could not be the movements they were without the friction: Art is play, or rather play is creativity; it is Freedom from the past. However, it is not possible for it to exist without game, without the opposite which are rules the challenging of them and the free movement within them. The child cannot be free without the adult. The artist cannot make art without the one who finds temporary freedom in it, outside of everyday life. Play, and thus art, is the confirmation of social relations just like anarchism is never anarchism, as it cannot function as its very definition without the contrary.

### **PART III: XIst century social change and play**

In the first chapter we have seen, we have defined what is Play and what is crucial for the development of a person and its adaptability in the world. Often, we associate play with children who need to learn to live in the world and in society. What we forget, is that people learn throughout the duration of our lives. Of course, adults do not learn neither at the same ease or speed as children, and Play as a learning method does not have the same efficiency, but it stays the most important element in order to open oneself up to new things or learning new material. As stated above, Game, as a set of rules, is defining the possible play within those rules. In return, Play can be equally defining for the rules of the game.

Children, who play with each other, already have a way of seeking order within their play and thus create certain structures or rules that could suit all players involved. In a sense, we can say that individuals who settled into a certain regime of rules formed the human community. These rules are in place and can allow everybody have the freedom to play. And as humans are a community species, Political Animals as Aristotle said. It is not clear that the anarchist rebel who is denying all the rules, is not re-evaluating the rules nor is he seeking for a new kind of order within the community, he is simply not playing within it. Equally worrying is the one who abides by the rules. He is also not playing but rather a passive observer who accepts that the other players will make the rules for him.

Play is thus always a dialog, never a monolog. It is an active form of pluralism and needs to be treated as such. It is only through participation that the human can play and can, not only re-evaluate its concept of knowledge, but define the very make-up of the environment it lives in. Participation in society also presupposes the interest in the community and consequently, the player will have to think of the others in the game and take into consideration their wishes and conceptions. Play is therefore, by definition a participatory and communal undertaking and closely linked to social change. (Spitzer, 2006, p.314)<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "... Kindern und Jugendlichen in kleinen Bereichen Verantwortung zu übertragen, vor allem für andere und in kleinen Gruppen, sodas sie lernen, was es heist, Ansprüche auszugleichen, gemeinsam zu entscheiden und die Entscheidung als Gemeinschaft selbst dann mitzutragen, wenn man selbst eigentlich dagegen war etc. GEnauso,

An example stemming from the animal realm shows how playing with social conventions and rules can generate change within a group. There are Japanese monkeys called macaques that used to hate water. One day, a female monkey dared to go to the water and wash the potato she was about to eat. It took some time, but after some observation, the other monkeys recognised the benefit and started to copy her, especially the males. The males initially would refuse any advice by a monkey in a lower rank. However, the offspring and other females did. A generation later, they would all do so and even start playing with the water (Goldschmidt, 2014, p.43). Because of this development, the monkeys started to have a better diet and their brain could develop. All in all, what we can say is that through play, the community of the macaques evolved and so did their brain.<sup>11</sup>

Another example of social change through play, this time out of the human realm, stems from Papua New Guinea. As previously explained in Part II, sports were common method to introduce colonies with the colonisers' culture and as a distraction method from more important problems. After the Australian colonizers introduced cricket on their island, The Trobrianders, through Play, appropriated the game and approached it to their own culture. As a result, they managed to fundamentally change the game, its rules and its significance. The purpose of playing became a different one, away from the mere entertainment of a game towards a ritualized war game where competition and punishment was of evolutionary importance. This is indeed follows the backdrop of their own native culture. Namely, for them, reputation is very important for the structure and survival of the community (p.37) and the new model of cricket fit in better. Indeed, as the German psychiatrist Manfred Spritzer (2006) explains, reputation and the possibility of consequences are important elements for the survival of a community. The lack of said aspects would leave either the individual excluded or, and in the case of a cheater or a spoilsport, he would cause the end of the community (p.318). The Trobriand tribe is a good example of how a community

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wie man Sprechen nur in einer Sprachgemeinschaft durch Sprechen und Verstehen lernt, lernt man Sozialverhalten nur in einer Gemeinschaft, in und mit der man handeln darf und kann, Kooperation wird Spielerisch gelernt, aber das Spiel heist nicht *Mensch ärgere Dich nicht* und auch nicht *Monopoly*. Es heist *Miteinander leben! Und es ist kein Spiel.*" (Spitzer, 2006, p.314)

<sup>11</sup> The female monkey was in a way the Fluxus artist who sets an example of how to play and how it might change society for the better. With some chance, others will follow and copy the behaviour. However, it is probably also because the monkeys had an abundant amount of food, that they were able to undertake this change which actually was more of a luxury than a necessity.

managed to go against organised social change by an outside force through play and create order to fit its own ideas and help with the survival of their own culture.

Nevertheless, it is easy to understand the concept, when we are talking about a small community where the outcome of play and communal participation are easily observable and even measurable. It is however more difficult to understand the impact of the Play in view of a globalised society, where borders between economy, politics, individual, real and virtual are blurred and above all the feeling of community has all but dissolved by capitalist individualism<sup>12</sup>.

Already in the 60's, it was clear that the world became more and more economically complex. The SI coined the problem of this new separation of consumer and goods as Spectacle Society. They argued in line with Marxism, since the industrial revolution, the producer consumer cleavage is growing and people themselves are drifting apart from each other as a consequence. More so, after the discovery of internet, the era of hyper information and post-industrialism (Bell, 1974) gave globalisation a whole new meaning. Then, the people were not only separated through the system of production, they also became literally physically separated one from another.

And yet, one could argue that the internet brought about many ways to connect people more than ever. The World Wide Web facilitated the transmission of ideas, knowledge, and even goods to a point that anybody can learn how to build a house, how to generate energy or find a couch to sleep on, in case there is no home. We are at what we can call a third industrial revolution. The dynamics shift entirely away from the physical manufacturer towards a total digitalization of production ("The third industrial revolution", 2012).

As a consequence, there has been a discussion that could help rejuvenation of Play, namely the possibility for a universal basic income. It has come to a fore after a considerable amount of time in the early 21st century. Whether or not the Basic Income would stimulate economic investment or if it supports lazy people is incredibly interesting from a Fluxus and SI point of view. In theory, however, it could stimulate Play. With this Basic Income, each individual would be able to do what they

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<sup>12</sup> In a Situationist sense the feeling of community has become a spectacle as well which means it the motives are of an individualist and economic nature.

want. It would leave plenty of room for playing and exploring the limits just like Constant Nieuwenhuis proposed it in his New Babylon. From an economic point of view, it could even stimulate the economy as everybody can chose if they want to invest and make more money out of it or those who do not but do not starve either. (“Universal basic incomes”, 2016)

And yet, the probability is low as the tendencies drift another way. It is understandable, that the digitalization and virtualisation make people worry for their economic safety. It is also this fear and the hedging against a perceived economic collapse, which plays into the hand of the most the powerful industries. Banks, insurances, mortgages etc. make money by having people being motivated to pay them first from the fear of economic collapse and being forced onto the streets.<sup>13</sup> Also this fear is essential to neoliberalism itself. Financial and physical security, even at a basic level of non-annihilation, would not be reserved to the upper economic echelons.

Another side effect of the current mentality and economic system, there has been a resurgence of protectionism, conservatism and nationalism. And as long as Fear remains, and the majority of the world population will not even have the time to spend on leisure activities and play. This even reminds us of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s adage “The only thing to fear is fear itself” with self-explanatory resonance.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to analyse where we can find the tendencies towards participation of the ‘playing citizens’ in a community before we can state the actual power struggle which effects this development. In the 1960’s, the SI and Fluxus shouted out for more participation in the culture making instead of conquering model of mere culture consumption. The idea behind this was that Play was inherently participatory and Participation in culture making would provoke people to play with the inherent rules of society. It turned out that the before mentioned art movement’s wishes (participation, sharing intellectual property and goods, communal authorship of ideas and goods etc.), have been answered by popular culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in some ways.

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<sup>13</sup> Christina Lucas’ philosophical capitalism is a work of 10 different videos, where she depicts the economic value of different philosophical concepts such as life, death, fear, time, space, citizenship, happiness, beauty, etc. : [http://www.mudam.lu/fileadmin/media/download/education/edu\\_box/EDUBOX\\_Christina\\_Lucas.pdf](http://www.mudam.lu/fileadmin/media/download/education/edu_box/EDUBOX_Christina_Lucas.pdf)

Henry Jenkins (2013), a media scholar at the University of Southern California, describes the Millennial generation as total “participatory culture” which cherishes media sharing as its centre of attention. Community movements where sharing was in the centre of attention before the digital age, were much slower and on a more local level. Nowadays, the total participation<sup>14</sup> also comes from the vast digital media usage. The worldwide sharing is on a non-profit base and simplified through internet. Open source movements, fan pages, or DIY tutorials, are all phenomena within what he calls the participatory culture (Jenkins, 2013). This mode of sharing, with its unbelievable speed, offers a huge range of new play. Arranging and rearranging, appropriating rules and inventing rules all are possible within that limitless community.

Furthermore, when we look at the arts such as music, art, or movies, we can state, that the idea of authorship or originality in art has shifted towards a dialogue between different creatives, acting and reacting onto prior ideas, genres, stories. This culture can be dated back to the collages of Dada and also the movements of the 60s. Guy Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle* (1973) which was a cinematographic collage for instance, created legal problems for copy right issues and pointed out this very problem. Up until today, the very method of remixing, rearranging stays in our culture. Many of the tops grossing movies are either remakes or licenced from other media. (Guerrasio, 2017) The term “Heavy metal” for example has become a common term for a now famous music genre. William Burroughs, the inventor of this term around 1961, was a writer who cut up manuscripts and reassembled them in order to create new words. At the same time, Led Zeppelin was heavily copying styles and even entire titles of songs (Ferguson, 2015).

Copying and using other people’s creations has become a grey zone of the legal system. What an opportunity for free creative dialogue to flourish, isn’t it? “Plagiarism is necessary, progress implies it, [...] erase a false idea and replace it with the right one” (Debord, 1973, 00:11:37) Debord claimed. The SI idea of détournement was not about denying the old but to affirm the new as the new and the old as historical part of the past. Thus, looking back to Manzoni’s *artist shit*, one contemporary artist comes to mind: Wim Delvoye (2007) who developed his own

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<sup>14</sup> in this section, I use mainly the term participation and not play. This choice is made by the realisation, that play is participatory by nature and that participation requires the ability to play, not to blindly follow.

response to it. He created 10 different *Cloacas*, which are mechanical reproductions of the human digestive system. This brings forth the question, should the area of Play and the creative room within it be a tangible product capable of becoming one's property? This is a related topic but should be addressed in a different text.

Moreover, amateur video making could be a powerful proof of the democratization of creative media, potentially making artists out of each citizen. While oil paint and canvases are still extremely expensive, phones are quite cheap considering the range of possibilities offered by a phone or a laptop. Plus everyone has one. As a result, the production of images is speeded up and easy. Everyone can easily film and cut video and post it online and eventually everyone can become an artist and join the 'artistic debate'.<sup>15</sup>

The easy access to the visual mediums, not only gives everyone the opportunity to create, but it even becomes a visual communication method. By posting everything online, the opinion expressed through image and sound will be communicated to the rest of the worldwide community. From out the community, responses are created and so the information is in continuous alternation. Even more so, there is a continuous flux of information which makes it hard to pinpoint the author of a specific work. It allows the 'community' to assess and reassess the quality of everything.

Consequently, the whole question of value is at stake, again. Just like the Fluxus perfume bottles, they would also sell gags for 5 dollars however never sold any as they were too expensive for the workers who enjoyed them but too cheap for the art collectors.

Since today, everything is virtualised and consumerism is not reduced to goods anymore, but also immaterial means such as videos, it stands to reason, that artists identify this development and use it for the art's sake. Now, an art piece can be an uploaded video or a Facebook page. The art has indeed dissolved with the everyday life, making it possible for everyone to actually be the artist. Above all, the idea of quality has become extremely flexible in all strata of society and went from a top down

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<sup>15</sup> Contrary to the political and economic intentions of the two 60s movements, Wim Delvoye on his side, does not see the issue of separating the idea of 'open source' or democratisation of creations with the concept of capitalism

hierarchy to a decentralized evaluation system. Wikipedia for instance is a platform where everyone can add changes to documents. These changes have to be defended in front of the community<sup>16</sup>. This is interesting as the process of defining facts is not a work of one authority, or one scholar, but a group of brains collectively working together until a consensus is reached (Jenkins, 2013). As this consensus is not necessarily reached, the circle of protectionist idea of knowledge production is broken.

Furthermore, in times of hyper communication, the internet offers many options to interact with the society and evaluate our way of living together. In the 80s, there was the idea that economy could replace politics and create new social structures. Corporations would form giant networks with computers to collect data and prevent economic crashes. And there was the first form of internet. First coined as “cyberspace” by the writer William Gibson, this alternative space had become the powerful apolitical alternative space (Curtis, 2016). For some it meant a Utopian space where hierarchies did not exist, and for others it was an opportunity to overcome the politicians for the sake of free market. It could give room for Play and Game, as there could be a chance to make new rules. Nonetheless, the cyber space had become the ‘magic circle’ as Huizinga would call this safe zone of play. It was literally an almost atemporal time zone outside of the ordinary.

For example, in the community of those who play video games, the virtual world is considered a new world; a world that offers many other possibilities than reality. In SI and Fluxus terms for example, we can think of the notion of physical realities as limiting and restricting the possibilities of play. In return, in the alternate reality of video games, characters are able to jump buildings or take steps between rooftops<sup>17</sup>. Anne-Marie Schleiner compares gaming worlds to the alternative futuristic Situationist cities of SI architect Gilles Ivain. In particular his ideas on the proper disposition of neighbourhoods or quarters is very similar to the city maps of video games. His city was divided into neighbourhoods of which some were not only built for good and happy leisure but also for the dark parts within us. The Quarters represent the

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<sup>16</sup> Anyone can be part of the community; it is not in the classical sense of a jury that we use this term here.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.watchmojo.com/video/id/14251/> rooftop video games examples.

“whole spectrum of diverse feelings that one encounters by chance in everyday life”  
“Sinister Quarter, the child and the adult would learn not to fear the anguishing occasions of life, but to be amused by them”(Gilles, 1953).

The architect Gilles Ivain, created an alternative futuristic city to facilitate total participation and to generate a living situation for free people. In the situation of the game, the alternative time zone is created in order to practice things one would not do in the ordinary life. In Videogames, one can be transported into alternate realities where the player can fight his fears and even modify the very nature of the spaces on the go (Getsy, 2011, 151).

One computer game in particular has struck the world's attention lately. It is called *Minecraft*, the third bestselling video game of all time. The factor that sets it apart is that it is simple and does not have a story line like the others. It consists of very basic elements like cubic building blocks and very few non-playable characters. Those basic elements make up the whole virtual game. Although its visuals are pixelated, people are completely immersed in this game. But why is that? It might indeed lie within the strong tendency to prefer freer and more creative gaming culture. It is reminiscent of building blocks after all; the minimalist design, having a feel of early Lego toys all traits that underline this. As for the game, the only goal of the player is to collect material and build shelters and eventually whole worlds. Its popularity is due to the freedom of the players within this game. Some gamers build castles or others even entire electric circuits. With those building blocks just like sketch up, one can build professional models. While Lego is designing more and more 'particularized' Lego stories which one can build once and never again, mine craft managed to create something within which literally anything can be created (Minecraft: The Story of Mojang, n.d.)

Minecraft is only but a single example. It does not go to say that there is not a difference between new participation and the total participation of the 60's art movement:

First, technology has invaded our lives with negative repercussions as well. Notably, children suffer from overuse and monomania. Apart from that, during development, it is crucial to train the senses for future references. It is equally important for a child to have the freedom to interact with other children as it is an exploration of social structures. The development of empathy for example is essential in conflict solving.

However, nowadays, they seem to learn more in the virtual world than in real world. Some schools have Minecraft as a class where they learn how to build houses and grow crop with pixels but do not go outside and build a hut. A teacher even claimed that he “can’t drop them into the forest and ask them to build a shelter in real life” (Minecraft: The Story of Mojang, n.d.). On the contrary, they would need to do so as it is crucial for the development of social skills as explained above. Even at a later stage the adults need to continue to make these tangible experiences for refreshment of their knowledge and re-evaluation according to the situation. However, in my opinion, if those experiences have not been made previously in life, it is hard to start at a later stage. Children, who apparently cannot go into the forest to build a hut, will never experience the physicality of things, the communal effort that needs to go into building a hut etc. Those elements are necessary to be able to solve problems in adult life in a community. It is indeed, the very alienation from the tangible and the experience which is the main problem encountered in the emergence of internet.

Second, in a world where the economic value is virtual, but with the same weight as interpersonal relations, we are offered an illusion of freedom, interaction, participation and play. Where normally none of the previous mentioned are tangible and tradable, they have now become more fuel for fire of the new consumerist. As Guy Debord said, even dissatisfaction became a commodity. We are living in the futuristic spectacle society, one where we are not only consuming images or ideas, we are consuming and producing opinions. They stand fleeting, temporary and flexible. They resemble a hose with running water: Pliable and only able to hold shape through passing water but again never full.

It is in these conditions of this apolitical alternate reality called the World Wide Web – the idea of a utopia without politics – with its flexible rules, that free market par excellence flourished the most. It is not the mere fact, that the free market is a capitalist system which presents the danger to our freedom; it is the fact that the internet is becoming a playground for economists to play the game of free market.

Joris Luyendijk, Dutch anthropologist and journalist, analysed the behaviour of bankers and noted, that bankers see the economic market as a game. Most of them do not even do it for the money but for the high stakes. One could even think, that in Huizinga’s terms it seems to be Play after all. In the contrary, although it seems like

rules are flexible and defined by the players, one cannot immediately say, that just because something is in the grey zone of the legal system; something that is not explicitly illegal, that the behaviour was righteous. Indeed, contradictorily, the economic system does ask for loyalty, neither friendship nor punishment. For example, during the crisis in 2008, the major stake holders did not even get prosecuted for their deeds<sup>18</sup>. It shows how important it is for all players involved to agree to certain rules. It is not so much that the rules were challenged or re-evaluated, rather that the rules were flawed. (Its playtime, 2014, p.79)

As Huizinga calls it, the

‘spoil-sport is not the same as the false player, the cheat; for the latter pretends to be playing the game and, on the face of it, still acknowledges the magic circle. It is curious to note how much more lenient society is to the cheat than the spoil-sport. This is because the spoil-sport shatters the play-world itself.’ (Huizinga, 1949, p.11)

Joris Luyendijk’s answer to the question, whether or not the crisis produced ‘significant spoil-sports [...] or new rules? Did they change the game?’ was ‘everything is basically back to normal: no major convictions, no major overhauls, and the incestuous relationship between banks and politics remains in place. That makes it also a systemic crisis. **The problem isn’t so much that people break the rules of the system, but that the system itself makes such behaviour possible.**’ (Luyendijk, 2014, p.85)

In the end, this game has much less to do with play for social change than with a sport. Manfred Spitzer (2006), explains how, from an evolutionary point of view, the element of punishment is very important in a community in order to keep the community feeling intact. (p.316). In a sense one can say, that a spoil sport is ruining the game for everyone and in a community, that relies on the communal aspect to survive as for example in stone age, he is also the one ruining it for the survival of the community. In a globalised community, however, there is not much punishment due to the lack of community feeling which could keep the ‘game’ of economics intact.

It is thus not, because the internet is a playground and economics a game why

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<sup>18</sup> In Greece for instance, no minister of Finance has been prosecuted for doubling the sovereign debt in 5 years. Eurostat, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=teina225&language=en>

it is so dangerous. It is because such an element as the economics is transcending the boundaries of the real and the non-real, the game and the politics.

“You are a gamer whether you like it or not, now that we all live in a game space that is everywhere and nowhere. As Microsoft says: where do you want to go today? You can go anywhere you want in game space but you can never leave it” (McKenzie, 2007).

McKenzie claims in his *Gamer Theory*. It is because we are trapped in a maze and we have not even noticed we are trapped. The fact that we live in a game of truth, and even more that we know we might live in a lie but accept it is the most dangerous observation to make. It means that there is no motivation to change anymore mainly because nobody knows what should replace the last lie.

In one sense, the status of rules remains so flawed, that breaking the rules has become the rule.

## **PART IV: STATEMENT**

As noted above, the definition of, and distinction between the two Play and Game are hard to grasp. Both understandably have separate qualities and functions within the ludic activities. However, throughout the research, it has become clear that Play and Game are as complex as humanity itself. Instead of explaining the essence of playful freedom of humans or the legitimacy of a possible social contract through game, it seems to be the impossibility to distinguish both from each other. Mostly because both have similar roles in the foggy landscape, which they are found in.

We, as a society, try to control everything and to define everything in a rigid and inflexible way to claim stability thereafter. This could stand as a vice for us. We do not know how to play anymore. Society on the whole is grown up or in a hurry to. It is if it is hard to remember its childhood anymore. I do not ask the people to be naïve and impulsive like children, but I do not think that the games should consequently defend a certain moral either. The inflexibility of morals, the seriousness of game, and the disrespectful spoilsport, all play a part in the political uprising of discrimination on one hand and the absolute ignorance on the other. There is a clash between the kids who decided to create a gang and those who decided not to care. It starts at a young age where children develop into conditioned, well-behaved (or rather behaving according to the system) children instead of those who learned how to build a hut and appropriate their environment for their own specific worldview. Later, they become adults who all have the same worldview or do not care that their data is collected or are even brainwashed into buying things they didn't want before or need at all.

Essentially, in a time of Internet, there is no runaway anymore, not even within the internet. There are no rules to be broken, no play in the steering wheel, it is actually the breaking of rules, which became the rule. We are trapped within the rules of the game. Unfortunately, nobody knows the rules and nobody knows who makes them. Exactly that is the most ambiguous of all. There is no proper person to blame on anything anymore. Illusion has become the system, no one knows who the leader in the problem is. We are the ultimate form of spectacle; we are so to say in a Hyper-Normalised era (Curtis, 2016). In other words, we do not care if our data is collected,

we know we are brainwashed and yet we think we are free to choose (Harris, 2012).<sup>19</sup> There is no alternative space anymore. Reality is everywhere, even in the virtual world, the World Wide Web, which once was the alternative apolitical space. It went so far as for us to think we might be the virtual world whereas the virtual world is reality and the ruling force. We are stuck in a loop of ambiguity and ignorance.

Unfortunately, everything that has been done to find an alternative, safe place has been expropriated by the holders of the main means of production; money. The lords of the money do this for the purpose of making this shadow system of power even stronger. We live in desperate sarcasm. In the visible irony of being wrong, knowing it, yet choosing it. Irony has been turned into irony and therefore irony revenged irony for being absurd. Society is a perpetuated irony and nobody knows where in the loop we are. And as we are in the middle of the chaos of Irony, we start thinking, maybe we have to stop caring in order to stop the loop? Maybe Irony are the rules of this game. But is it Play after all? Maybe revolution is not the right way to go indulge in it? For example, some of the most praised artists, such as Delvoeye (2007) and Hirst, are those who dive into the complexity and absurdity of the system and appropriate the rules for their own good because they are tired of being the ones confirming them by opposition.

Should we then come back to a 'purely spectacular rebellion'? Should we show the people the absurdity they are in if we do not know where we are either? I am of the opinion that we are used to the shock itself or the rebellion. These two have become symbols of our generation, which dwells in Sarcasm/Irony. Indeed, it is not enough to present the viewer with activities, where he can recognize the missing freedom or play in his own life. On the contrary, the viewer should live the moment of play to be able to taste the missing freedom. Although the interactive art in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century was a start in order to trigger a certain cognitive realization within the viewer, the separation between the artist as the creator of the art object and the visitor was still quite passive. In the 70s, the tendency of the artists was to merge creation and aesthetical, facilitate play, and, in some cases, even invite the visitors to be part of the creation of the art piece itself. Nevertheless, their work was still a representational mode of making the

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<sup>19</sup>"behind the masks of total choice, different forms of the same alienation confront each other", I now think of social media, and the white noise of most online life' "dissatisfaction itself became a commodity" (Harris, 2012).

viewer feel like an alien or a visitor to this freedom. This can be seen especially after the death of these artists when they were fixed in art history, with their work coined as 'art' works, conserved and exhibited as emblems of unrealistic utopian ideas. What was left of them was a sentimental feeling of possibilities never achieved. And huge economic value, making them unattainable to the economic un-elite

In today's situation, I believe that, we do not need to show people what they were missing, against what many revolutionary artists, such as the Situationists, tried to do, in order to be smiled at. We desperately need to find other ways of making people aware of their very position within and their impact on their surroundings.

During my research, I tried to develop an understanding on how art can use Play in order to generate social change, I noticed that almost all Visual art forms that try to use Play as interaction with the visitor were not necessarily busy with social change but another way of creating awareness. It struck me that indeed if they are in the art world, they cannot really make social change, or at least not in such a measurable level as the example of the monkeys and potatoes.

Lately, at the MACCH Conference in Maastricht on Participatory practices (March 2017), I noticed that the idea of Participatory museums was not necessarily in favour of social change. I have not entirely grasped the goal of such practices, in my opinion, as well because those are very young. One speaker Danielle Carter explained how play should be a fundamental part of museums. However, those practices of play for the sake of making art education more 'fun', seemed to me more akin to restrictions as they were too narrow. During those 'playful' hours for children, they still have to behave in a certain way within the rules of the museums. Of course, I understand that Museums have a responsibility towards the artworks and the accessibility to everyone, and the danger of breaking would influence that goal. Therefore, I think that first, Play seems to be reserved to Children in Museums; second, Play can only happen within very strict and adult rules around art; and third, museums are and will stay elitist enclosed art spaces and therefore do not offer the possibility to be entirely social.

Although I see the relation between aesthetics, art, and play, I do not agree that all three elements have to move within the institution of art. In very blunt terms, I'd say that it is comparable to religion; for instance: Christianity. Christianity promotes very good and social ideas, nonetheless the institution of the Church has generated much

tragedy in the world's history, the crusades let us say. Therefore, I do believe that, in order to create social change with art, in today's society; it is more interesting to step outside of the commercial art world. One example could be the Yes Men, who with their gag like actions resemble a lot to the Fluxus artist's actions (Les Yes Men se révoltent, 2016). They organise or rather perform actions where they underline the loopholes in Politics by infiltrating into press conferences and proclaiming the truth disguised as members of the Press. Their intention is to ridicule Politics and force them into recognizing their absurdity, and like this to make them change their ways.

The Yes Men have managed to create some change on political level, also thanks to their fame nowadays. They are not considered artists and yet they were proactive and very creative and playful in order to do complete these actions. However, again, these men did not trigger play within people. On the contrary, they stayed in a tradition of rebel revolutionaries who just refuse to play the game.

How, then, can we make sure, it is not only an elitist minority who is allowed to play, nor to glorify play as a revolutionary activity, but to make it an integral part of everybody's everyday life?

In my opinion, the solution lies within education and within the way of acting in everyday life. It is a daily practice that should be supported by constant presence of education. It is also a sensory and heuristic process. Therefore, I condemn video games. They replace real play by means of supporting the confusion between real and virtual and in consequence between truth and lies before the children even had a chance to experience the material reality. In that sense, I respect Fluxus Art as it was very sensorial and even was created in a way that it did not need a specific time and space to be experienced. Fluxus ideas could easily be exercises carried out for children. And if parents do these exercises alongside the children or even just play with them, they gain from it themselves as well. What is more, as play is often seen as something children do but not adults, it would be a very nice idea to create adult playgrounds where they can play as much as they want, with the helpful side effect that they become motivated to help their children play more.

Although I have not really found satisfying examples of play and interaction for the sake of social change in museum art, I have found out, that theatre, by its nature, is very playful and can easily create awareness in the participator. Forum Theater for instance is a frequent method used to break the ice in a workplace as a

team-building exercise. By playfully treating a specific theme within the community, the participants can step outside the real and later reflect on what they have learned. It is precisely the reflective capacity of adults, which makes play an even stronger element in the creation of awareness. Children need the freedom to explore and incorporate their reality, the adults need to reflect on what they have already incorporated.

I have, until now in my development moved further and further from the Art world itself. I would even say, that SI and Fluxus were right to strive and fight for a greater amount of play and creativity everyday life. Does that mean art will disappear?

“Of course, art-making will go on. But art-makers, living in what I like to call the post-historical period of art, will bring into existence works which lack the historical importance or meaning we have for a long time come to expect [...] The story comes to an end, but not the characters, who live on, happily ever after doing whatever they do in their post-narrational insignificance [...] The age of pluralism is upon us...when one direction is as good as another” (Morgan, & Purje, 2015)

as Danto once said about the future of art. I agree with this position even more so, I add that, when we talk about social change and art and play, we have to leave the old definition of art and accept the total immersion and consequently the loss of the status of Art.

All in all, when art enters the everyday life, I dare to claim, we will not be able to measure, neither its existence, nor its impact anymore. It is clear to me that play and creativity can help in developing humans into fully autonomous critical human beings capable to stand in society. They can also become resilient to political and media manipulation. However, it will not ensure a humanitarian outcome or a communist, leftist, or any other outcome. Therefore, it is even harder to assume that play and creativity will at all generate social change, even more so for the better, independent of my left leaning. It would only ensure, that people would take decisions consciously and from out their own motivation and conviction.

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