

# Naples Daily News

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## Musical art by Yoko Ono and more at FSW's Fluxus exhibit in Fort Myers

**CHARLES RUNNELLS**, CRUNNELLS@NEWS-PRESS.COM Published 12:35 p.m. ET Aug. 23, 2017 | Updated 9:36 a.m. ET Aug. 25, 2017



(Photo: Special to The News-Press)

It's playful. It's random. It's Fluxus.

What other art movement would ask people to take off their shoes and walk through a giant box of beans? Or make "music" by chewing carrots?

All in the name of art.

Just don't try nail down precisely WHAT Fluxus is, though. That's part of the appeal, says Bob Rauschenberg Gallery director Jade Dellinger.

"If you can define it, it's not Fluxus," Dellinger says, paraphrasing a quote from Fluxus artist Ben Patterson. "And, really, it comes to that.

"Fluxus comes out of Dada. It can be seen as a sort of anti-art."



A new exhibit at Rauschenberg Gallery takes a close look at the musical aspect of Fluxus, the 60s and 70s art collective inspired by composer John Cage and his penchant for using randomness and audience participation in his work.

"Cage was really the progenitor," Dellinger says. "He's the one from which all of this really springs."

**MORE:** [Yoko Ono talks about art, peace and John Lennon in 2015 News-Press interview \(/story/entertainment/2015/05/21/yoko-ono-talks-art-peace-john-lennon/27653397/\)](#)

The exhibit opens Friday and features work and artifacts from Cage, Yoko Ono, George Maciunas, Geoffrey Hendricks, Allison Knowles, Nam June Paik, Philip Corner and more.

The international Fluxus movement included artists, musicians, designers, dancers, architects, chefs and more. Now many of those artists are dead, Dellinger says, and the remaining ones are in their 70s and 80s.

That's why Dellinger wanted to do a survey of their work and their lasting influence. The south Fort Myers gallery has already featured exhibits of work by several Fluxus artists, including Ono, Corner and Cage — Dellinger's first exhibit at the gallery was in 2012.

"I felt like, five years in, we should do a show that really explores the history," Dellinger says. "I think it's an important time to do a historical examination of Fluxus."

The movement has continued to be an influence on experimental art and music in the 21st century, Dellinger says. "It's really hard to put a finger on how to define it. But it's clearly been incredibly influential. It's a movement that I think will continue to resonate."

The new art exhibit is called "FluZUsic/FLUXIS MUSIC." Corner came up with the Dr. Seuss-like word FluZUsic ((pronounced Flue-ZOO-sick), Dellinger says. "There's a playfulness to it."

Allison Knowles' "Bean Garden" lets people take off their shoes and walk through a big box of dry beans. The sounds are amplified by microphones to become a kind of music. The piece is part of the "FluZUsic/FLUXIS MUSIC" exhibit at Bob Rauschenberg Gallery in south Fort Myers. (Photo: Special to The News-Press)



*(Photo: Photo by Tom Haller)*

The interactive, immersive exhibit includes Knowles' Zen-like "Bean Garden": An 8- by 12-foot wooden box filled with 3,000 pounds of dry Great Northern beans. Microphones under the box pick up the sounds of feet and beans, Dellinger says, and they amplify those sounds to create a sort of music.

"It's kind of like a sandbox," he says. "People take off their shoes and walk through it. .... It allows people to be playful and walk through the beans.

"And I gotta tell you: It feels amazing. It's a visceral experience. Your feet feel massaged. It's a totally therapeutic thing to do."

**MORE:** [It's OK: Hit the art at Rauschenberg Gallery with a stick \(/story/entertainment/2016/07/28/rauschenberg-gallery-glenn-branca-philip-corner-art-music-news-press-runnells-charles/87529352/\)](#)

Another piece, Corner's "Carrot Chew," asks viewers to participate by chewing on raw carrots and making "music" as they follow along to a rough musical score.

"He (Corner) sort of sees it as a score for a musical production," Dellinger says, "but with music coming from the audience as they chew carrots."

Other pieces include Piak's video portrait of Cage, self-playing musical instruments by Joe Jones (they use motors to beat tambourines and guitar strings) and an original art billboard by Ono.

Ono's billboard is located on U.S. 41 in south Fort Myers near the intersection of Gladiolus Drive. It features big black letters on a plain white background: "I LOVE YOU EARTH."

The message refers to the title of one of Ono's songs, Dellinger says, and also ties in to her interest in environmental issues such as fracking.

"FluZUusic/FLUXUS MUSIC" continues through Nov. 11. Friday's opening day includes an 11 a.m. lecture and demonstration by Knowles and a public reception from 6-8 p.m.

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## **If you go**

**What:** "FluZUusic/FLUXUS MUSIC" exhibit

**Where:** Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at Florida SouthWestern State College, 8099 College Parkway S.W., Building L, south Fort Myers.

**When:** Opens Friday and continues through Nov. 11. Opening day includes an 11 a.m. lecture and demonstration by artist Allison Knowles and a public reception from 6-8 p.m.

**Admission:** Free

**Gallery hours:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday

**Info:** 489-9313 or rauschenberggallery.com (<http://rauschenberggallery.com>)