

Critical Mass: Happenings, Fluxus, Performance, Intermedia, and Rutgers University, 1958-1972



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Rutgers University from 1958 to 1972 was at the center of many new developments in the art world. Artists connected with Happenings and Fluxus created works that had a major impact in New York and abroad. A dozen years after Allan Kaprow's first Happening on Rutgers' Douglass campus in 1958, George Maciunas (Mr. Fluxus) created his major late composition, the *Flux-Mass*, in the same space, and Hermann Nitsch, the Viennese Actionist, presented his controversial Orgies-Mysteries-Theater. These radical shifts in art paralleled calls to rethink attitudes about race, sex, gender, and war during turbulent times in America's history.

Critical Mass chronicles this ephemeral work on the Rutgers campus and in New York City, and the innovations that grew from Bob Watts, Allan Kaprow, and George Brecht's "Project in Multiple Dimensions." With texts and performance scores by artists together with numerous photographs of the events and essays by art historians and critics Hannah Higgins, Jill Johnston, Susan Ryan, and Kristine Stiles, *Critical Mass* presents a vivid picture of this dynamic moment.

This volume is a companion to an exhibit that will be on display at the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts, from January 24 through April 27, 2003, and at the Mason Gross Art Galleries at Rutgers University from September through November 2003.

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