

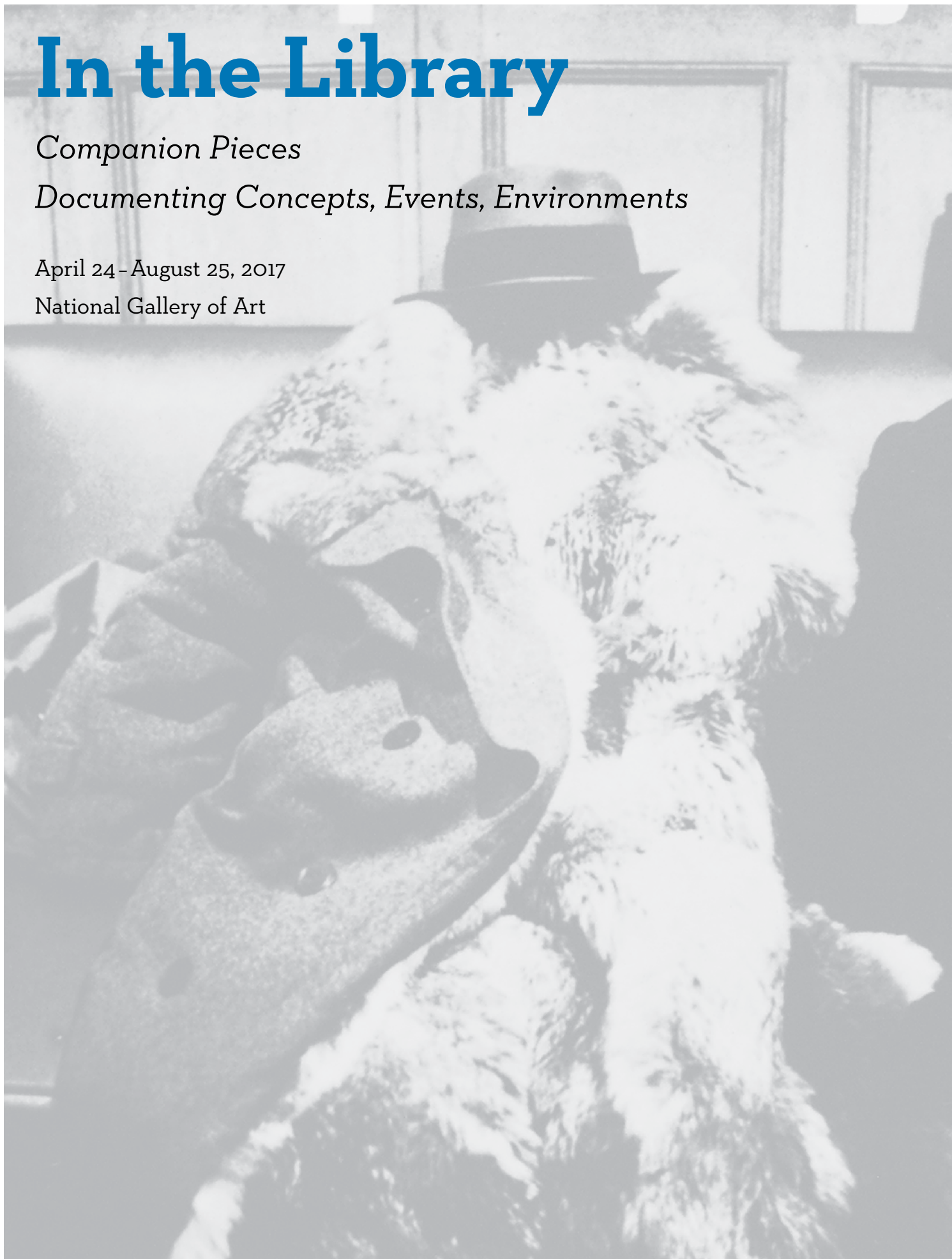
In the Library

Companion Pieces

Documenting Concepts, Events, Environments

April 24 - August 25, 2017

National Gallery of Art



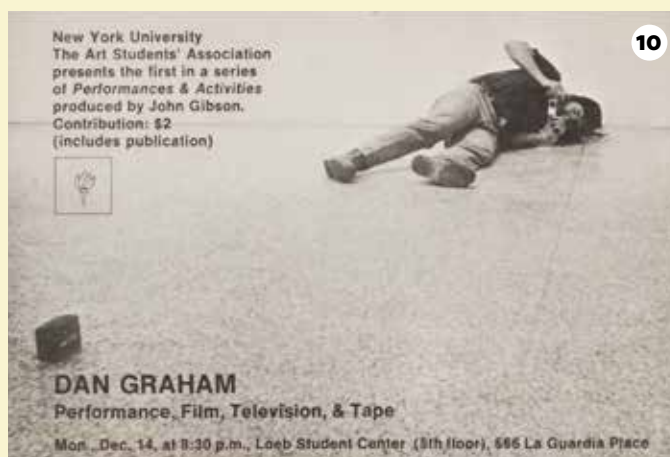
In the Library

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Documenting Concepts, Events, Environments

The 1960s and '70s marked a sea change in the production and exhibition of art. Avant-garde art movements of the time emphasized ideas, experience, and process over the tangible artwork. Art became temporary, site-specific, or dematerialized altogether. Happenings, events, and performances took place at a specific time and place — such as a chilly day in 1968 spent moving empty metal barrels from site to site for Allan Kaprow's happening *Transfer* (no. 9). Art lovers ventured out from the white-walled gallery space to immersive environments, as seen in *Daniel Spoerri's Room No. 631 at the Chelsea Hotel* (no. 6). Other "exhibitions" seemingly took place outside of time and space, as with Seth Siegelau's catalog for the immaterial exhibition *One Month* (no. 2). Even visual artists working in traditional media, such as painting and sculpture, used conceptual frameworks and aspects of performance to create their artwork. For example, the game board for Lucio Pozzi's *Inventory Game* of 1975 supplied a set of materials, concepts, and techniques that the artist combined to create his paintings (no. 25).

As artworks became more ephemeral, artists, galleries, and museums conceived of new ways to record, distribute, and exhibit works of art. Companion pieces — photographs, films, videos, written narratives, or instructions — provided evidence of the existence of a work, or acted as surrogates for the artwork itself. Many of these documents are now highly valued art objects in and of themselves, found in museums and private art collections. The companion pieces presented here, however, were primarily unsigned documents with unlimited print runs intended for broad distribution. Selected from the Vertical Files, the library's ephemera collection, these postcards, invitations, programs, and exhibition catalogs promoted, recorded, and explained performances, environments, and conceptual artworks. They invited participation, as in the invitation for John Cage and David Tudor's *Variations IV* (no. 5); recounted what happened, as with the exhibition catalog for Chris Burden's *Do You Believe in Television?* (no. 17); provided evidence of a work, such as the exhibition catalog for Jan Dibbets's *Audio-Visuelle Dokumentation* (no. 24); and, as is often required of avant-garde movements, perhaps provided answers to a skeptical audience that continually asked, "Is it Art?"



While many of the companion pieces presented here provide a fragment of a finished performance, environment, or conceptual artwork, they fully reflect the spirit of the 1960s and '70s. Influenced by the civil rights, antiwar, and feminist movements, artists of the time were interested in the democratization of the art experience. Space exploration and the 1969 moon landing fueled interest in new technologies. Not only did the artists embrace state-of-the-art tools when creating their works, as in *9 Evenings: Theatre & Engineering* (no. 7) and Dick Higgins's *Computers for the Arts* (no. 26), increasingly available printing methods, such as the Xerox machine, allowed for quick and easy reproduction and dissemination of flyers, programs, and postcards. Easily printed and widely circulated, the items from this show allowed for greater engagement with the artist, his or her artwork, and with the experimental spirit of the time.

Section 1

New Exhibitions and New Catalogs for a New Art

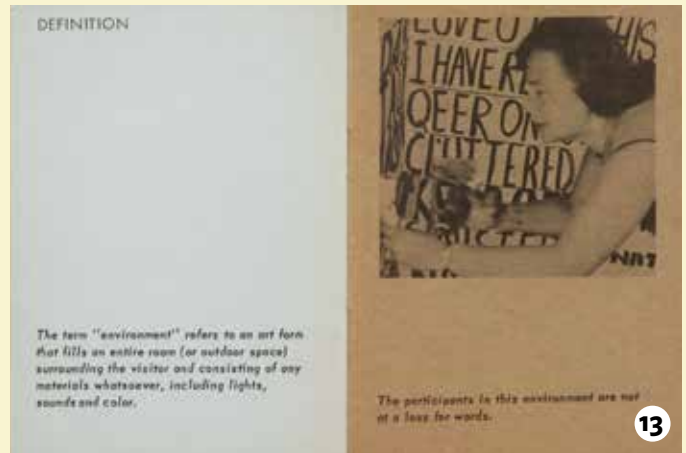
The new art of the 1960s and '70s required imaginative modes of exhibition. Curator Lucy Lippard described her numbers shows, including the Buenos Aires show 2.972.453, as "suitcase exhibitions," meaning that works no longer had to be shipped to a venue. Rather, installations, site-specific works, and conceptual pieces could be mounted in distant locations using local resources by following instructions and plans from the artist. The innovative catalog for 2.972.453 (**no. 1**), composed of index cards for artists and works, invited participation, allowing the reader to "curate" the show by arranging the cards in any order. Seth Siegelaub, another curator known for championing conceptual art, published exhibition catalogs for which there was no concurrent gallery show at all. For *One Month* and *Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Daniel Buren . . .* (**no. 3**), artists contributed works that were either conceptual in nature or decentralized to several sites. The gallery Art & Project exhibited works by many conceptual artists. Its eponymous bulletin (**no. 4**) occasionally served as a typical promotional mailing, but more often operated as a venue for artists to extend the reach of their conceptual works, as when Robert Barry announced that "during the exhibition the gallery will be closed."

- 1** Lucy Lippard and Jorge Glusberg, 2.972.453, catalog for exhibition at Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1970, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files
- 2** Seth Siegelaub, *One Month*, exhibition catalog, New York, New York, 1969, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files, Vogel Collection
- 3** Seth Siegelaub, *Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Daniel Buren, Jan Dibbets, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, N.E. Thing Co. Ltd., Robert Smithson, Lawrence Weiner*, exhibition catalog, New York, New York, 1969, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files, Vogel Collection
- 4** Art & Project, *Art & Project Bulletin*, miscellaneous issues, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1969 - 1975, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files, Vogel Collection

Section 2

Documenting the Future

The invitations, postcards, and programs displayed here accessorized events the audience would soon be witnessing. At their most straightforward, they request attendance, as with the invitation to Joseph Beuys and composer Henning Christiansen's FLUXUS event on March 20, 1967 (**no. 8**). At their most comprehensive, they provide detailed and informative descriptions of performances, as with the suite of materials that accompanied *Dan Graham: Performance, Film, Television, & Tape* at New York University in 1970 (**nos. 10 - 12**).



- 5** Feigen/Palmer Gallery, *John Cage with David Tudor Present a Performance of Variations IV*, invitation, Los Angeles, California, 1965, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files
- 6** The Green Gallery, *Daniel Spoerri's Room No. 631 at the Chelsea Hotel*, poster/invitation, New York, New York, 1965, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files
- 7** 25th Street Armory, *9 Evenings: Theatre & Engineering*, program, New York, New York, 1966, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files
- 8** Franz Dahlem, *FLUXUS: Joseph Beuys, Henning Christiansen*, invitation, Munich, Germany, 1967, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files
- 9** Wesleyan University, *Transfer: A Happening (For Christo)*, by Allan Kaprow, poster/invitation, Middletown, Connecticut, 1968, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files
- 10** New York University, *Dan Graham: Performance, Film, Television, & Tape*, invitation, New York, New York, 1970, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files, Vogel Collection
- 11** New York University, *Dan Graham: Performance*, program, New York, New York, 1970, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files, Vogel Collection
- 12** John Gibson Gallery, *Performance 1: Dan Graham*, periodical, New York, New York, 1970, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files, Vogel Collection

Section 3

Exhibiting the Past

Contemporary art spaces in the 1960s and '70s were challenged to mount exhibitions of events from the recent past. Occasionally this involved repeating performances in a new space, as when Barry Le Va re-created his performance and sound work *Velocity Piece* — which had been performed a year earlier at Ohio State University — for the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art exhibition *Projections: Anti-Materialism* (no. 14). The Smolin Gallery's small catalog *Words* accompanied a series of environments and happenings, and included clear definitions for these new art forms (no. 13). Exhibition catalogs, like those for *Valie Export* (no. 15) and *Marina Abramović* (no. 16), documented performance artists' work, while also presenting components and instructions, indicating the potential for repetition and re-creation. The catalog *Eleanor Antin: The Angel of Mercy* described the artist's multipart and multimedia artistic practice, which included performance, photography, and installation (no. 18).

- 13 Smolin Gallery, *Words*, exhibition catalog, New York, New York, 1962, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files
- 14 La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, *Projections: Anti-Materialism*, exhibition catalog, San Diego, California, 1970, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files, Vogel Collection
- 15 Biennale de Paris, *Valie Export: Works from 1968 – 1975, a Comprehension*, exhibition catalog, Paris, France, 1975, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files
- 16 Muzeja Savremene Umetnosti, *Marina Abramović: Ritam 10, 5, 2, 4, 0*, exhibition catalog, Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 1975, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files
- 17 Alberta College of Art Gallery, "Do You Believe in Television?": *Chris Burden, February 18, 1976*, exhibition catalog, Calgary, Canada, 1976, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files
- 18 La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, *Eleanor Antin: The Angel of Mercy*, exhibition catalog, San Diego, California, 1977, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files

Section 4

Art from Afar

The postcards, catalogs, and pamphlets presented here reflect the tendency toward democratization and mobility of the art experience, despite the fact that site-specific and performance artworks implicitly excluded audiences who either couldn't attend or weren't invited. Joseph Beuys's postcard multiples reflected trends of repetition and serialization while extending the reach of his artistic practice through the everyday action of sending mail (nos. 19–22). Artworks for which only the artist was present, including those of Richard Long (no. 23) and Jan Dibbets (no. 24), were documented and distributed through pamphlets, catalogs, and audio recordings.

19 Edition Staeck, *Cologne*, postcard by Joseph Beuys, Heidelberg, Germany, 1968/1969, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files

20 Edition Staeck, *Joseph Beuys*, postcard, Heidelberg, Germany, 1974, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files

21 Edition Staeck, *joseph beuys auf dem flug nach amerika*, postcard, Heidelberg, Germany, 1974, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files

22 Edition Staeck, *Joseph Beuys: Honigpumpe am Arbeitsplatz*, set of ten postcards, Heidelberg, Germany, 1977, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files

23 *A Sculpture by Richard Long Presented by Konrad Fischer*, pamphlet, 1971, National Gallery of Art, Vertical Files

24 Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, *Jan Dibbets: Audio-Visuelle Dokumentationen*, exhibition catalog, Krefeld, Germany, 1969, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files, Vogel Collection

Section 5

Instructions

Blurring the line between artist and audience, artists published instructions, guides, and games for the creation of new artworks — incorporating elements of play, humor, and chance. Dick Higgins, an early member of Fluxus, created a guide, *Computers for the Arts* (no. 26), which uses the FORTRAN computer language to generate concrete poetry. For those wanting to dive into the art world, Les Levine provided a fee-based consultation service, which included advice for "earth artists" and "computer artists," as well as advice on where to be seen, how to avoid becoming an artist's spouse, and art supplies for conceptual artists (no. 27).

25 Lucio Pozzi, *Inventory Game*, grid with instructions, 1975, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files, Vogel Collection

26 Dick Higgins, *Computers for the Arts*, Abyss Publications, Somerville, Massachusetts, 1970, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files

27 Les Levine, *Museum of Mott Art inc.: Catalogue of Services*, Museum of Mott Art inc., Washington, DC, 1971, National Gallery of Art Library, Vertical Files, Vogel Collection

Checklist of the exhibition *In the Library: Companion Pieces*, April 24 – August 25, 2017

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