RAFAEL MONTAÑEZ ORTIZ

YEARS OF THE WARRIOR 1960

YEARS OF THE PSYCHE 1988

EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

MARCH 26 - MAY 22 1988
“Destruction has no place in society—it belongs to our dreams; it belongs to art.” Ralph Ortiz

Introduction

The starting work of Rafael Montañez Ortiz (Ralph Ortiz) demands a response from the viewer. It questions the traditional definition of art, and encourages re-examination. In fact, from the onset of his artistic career, Ortiz has repeatedly performed in public, eliciting and incorporating audience participation even when it involved vigorous display.

In the gallery, the viewer is confronted with the archaeological finds in which furniture—often his own, where furniture donated by friends, always in perfect condition—is destroyed by Ortiz. One can also find the remains and listen to a recording of a Piano Concerto that the artist has performed with a harp in hand. Colorful and festive Feitler constructions on the floor and walls compel the viewer to imagine rituals of ancient cultures, while the use of audiovisual equipment and electronic media bring the viewer face to face with newly found venues for artistic expression.

Rafael Montañez Ortiz’s commitment to the interaction with the audience does not end with the creation and presentation of his art, nonetheless. A professional educator, he has taught in elementary schools, high schools, colleges, and universities. He has been teaching at the university for the last sixteen years. It was in the late 1970s while working with the Board of Education in New York City (High School of Music and Art) that Ortiz was appointed as the first director of his proposed cultural project for the Barrio, which he called El Museo del Barrio. It was a project that flirted with the Public School District offices. In an interview published by Artforum in 1971, Ortiz explained that this unconventional body of work, which had lead him to search for a way to authenticate his ethnic experience. He saw El Museo del Barrio as a “practical alternative to the conventional,” which he hoped would facilitate the revival of “living values” and thereby personalize cultural experience.

It is particularly meaningful for this institution, thus, to present a comprehensive examination of the work of Rafael Montañez Ortiz. Neither his important contributions to the art scene in the sixties and early seventies, when he was known as Ralph Ortiz, nor more recent artistic production, have been explored in any depth within a public context.

It is appropriate for El Museo del Barrio to re-examine this unconventional body of work within the larger picture of the visual arts in the second half of the twentieth century.

Ortiz, who was extremely prolific through the sixties, early on gained the recognition of both the avant-garde community and the established collectives. Along with many experimental artists, including Al Hansen, Herman Nitsch, Otis Wilkins, Glenn O’Neal, Wolf Vostell, Ortiz participated in the Destruction in Art Symposium (Dias) in 1966. In London. From 1969 to 1971, his work entered important public and private collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the de Menil Collection in Texas. In his early work, Ortiz explored violence and destruction as a creative force. He combined art with a dream “that cannot be censored.” Throughout his career he has continued to experiment and redefine his role as an artist. He sees the artist as a catalyst, as an educator, as a shaman or medicine-man who can, can, and should, transform and cure the illnesses in our society.

Rafael Montañez Ortiz, whose oeuvre can be described as “Dreams of the Barrio,” 1960–1988, would not have been possible without the support of many individuals and organizations. First and foremost, the Museum Aid Programme, the New York State Council on the Arts provided the funds for the exhibition and catalogue. Dr. Kristine Stiles not only wrote a comprehensive essay on Mr. Montañez Ortiz’s oeuvre, she also compiled a valuable annotated bibliography. Furthermore, she was a generous collaborator, providing us with essential documents and information. Papa Colio, Josephine Hargis, and the staff at Art East designed and produced the catalogue. Their unique creativity and sensitivity in dealing with this non-traditional art, is matched by their unflagging enthusiasm and serious commitment to contemporary art.

Visual artist Jose Deppiesse resolved the difficulties in installing unusual pieces, and assisted the artist in recreating the Destruction Art Room.

Rafael Colio-Morales, Curator, and Carlos Ortiz-Cheves, Registrar of El Museo del Barrio organized and coordinated the exhibition with meticulous care and vision. We are particularly grateful to the private and public collections that made such pieces available to our museum. Finally, we are grateful to Rafael Montañez Ortiz, the primary source, and a willing collaborator.

Petra Barreras del Rio

Executive Director
RAFAEL MONTÁNEZ ORTIZ by Kristine Stiles

Introduction

Some thirty-five years ago, Rafael Ortiz began to construct a theory and practice which could account for his body as the leading potential of imagination and as relationship to physical, psychic, and social pain. A continuous line of development connects his first destruction of formal materials (1959-61), his destroyed furniture works, the archaeological Final (1961-67), with his final many manifestos Destruccion: A Manifesto (1962)-his Destruction Ritual Realizations (1965-70), and his Physics and Sexuality (1973 to the present). Already in the late 1950s, before he articulated his theory of "art as behavior" and the art as "the art material, the work of art in progress," he understood that physical and psychic processes held the key to the creation of an autonomous self and therefore an authentic art of quality and value. In his quest for the authentic, he also confirmed the necessity to conquer the spurious and to identify the phenomena of destruction as a key factor in unlocking the concealed truth of negative traditions which shape public and private behavior and which are rooted behind the façades of conventions, morality, and culture.

In this pursuit, Ortiz perceived that the body in its physical and psychic dimensions narrated the condition of the existential crisis as well as the principle metaphor of the historical suffering experienced by Amérindians. He appreciated that the human body plays a decisive role in the life-defying character of nihilism but that it also held the potential for a genuine renewal. In this sense, much in Eastern philosophy, Ortiz conceived of the mind-body unity as an achievement rather than an integral relationship. From the beginning, Ortiz appropriated the impossible origins of life and death, shaped as they are by the shortness of Being and also by the will to death.

In his early twenties, in the late 1950s, Ortiz declared that his interests and energies had been occupied in the etiology of creation. In precisely the same period and similar to the eminent French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who, in philosophy, began to examine the dichotomous structure of polarity which shape Western concepts and patterns of thought, Ortiz, in art, began to examine the absolute and taken for granted fact of creation-destruction, breaking the silences of his trade-speech and writing. Derrida explored such polarity as good / evil, being / nothingness, presence / absence, transcendence / identification, mind / matter, man / woman, life / death, consciousness. As an artist, Ortiz selected the dichotomy of creativity/ruination as the structure within which to explore the entities of his experience, an experience that, because of the politics which had shaped his life-directly white / black, rich / poor, dominant / minority, man / body, man / woman—led him to seek new passion.

Like Derrida, Ortiz noticed that the second term in each pair had been cast by society as spurious. For Ortiz, this meant that black, poor, minority, body, and woman represented the negative, corrupt, and undesirable version of the first; in other words, a fall from the ideal. Overstated (6’5”) and lanky, animal, dark-skinned, and poor, a Puerto Rican raised with all the repressive sexual conflict inherent in Catholicism, Ortiz sensed himself to be the embodiment of everything that signified the fall from perfection. In the shadow of the glow of white, rich, majority, male presence, of mind over body, Ortiz represented an erotic body, an existence proportionately in error, a discussion of the dominant truth, a delimitation of white, a default from rich to be some sort of woman, but man so imperfectly cast in terms of the prevailing values as to be ashamed of the superiority of that gender in the hierarchy of power. And yet, before the mirror, as it is distance of social conscious, stood an exigent presence possessing physical beauty and constructed a foundation on culture: a moon in conflict.

In his unparalleled study, The Body in Babel (1982), Elaine Scarry pointed out that "physical pain is exceptional in the whole fabric of psychic, social, and perceptual states" for being "the only state that has no object." Ortiz launched an extraordinary effort to objectify pain and to reduce suffering with aesthetic, homogenized, and social voice. He collapsed his sentiment into the work of art to unite the other absent presence of destruction with the creative power. In his art, however, a solitary exemplar, although his work assumed the form of analysis, a considered diagnosis and identification of the psychoneurological forces of destruction and creation within personal experience, culture, and society. His heroic effort to clarify the contradiction in contemporary life through the creative act was matched by a handful of the most controversial, complex, and important works throughout the world. Like them, he sought a comprehensive compendium of the ability of art to constructively affect social change in the atomic age.

Ortiz began his public career as an artist in the early 1950s and although he was subjected to widespread and20 intentional isolation in the popular media, he has been engrossed by historians, visited by the public, and treated with suspicion by artists. His utilization of the taboo language of violence caused him the neglect accorded mean innovations and visions. Nevertheless, long before Derrida's deconstructionism became radical chic in academic circles and both establishment and marginal
critical photography," exploited French philosophy and Marxism, a decade before even art critics marketed as "political art and criticism" earned their makers a comfortable living. Ortiz had arrived at a dissonant, political, aesthetic position and was unselfconsciously, and with the support of institutional and peer authorizations, investigating the labor oppositions, hierarchical orders, and emotional and sexual conflicts which give rise to our current condition. His destruction theory, objects, and rituals are attempts to found a critical diagnosis of the heteronomy and unauthenticity of the Self in contemporary history. They led to his present Physio-Psycho-Alchemy, a theory and ritual developed both as a meditation on the hidden dimension of Being and a means by which an integration of Self might be achieved through a phenomenology and philosophy of the Body as the material being of art.1

In 1952, Ortiz began to read-depth psychology during a contracted episode of pleurisy from which he convalesced for six months when he was eighteen years old. There followed an extensive period of research on Freud's concepts of the unconscious and its effects on behavior which introduced Ortiz to the psychological dimension of destruction and violence in private and public life. A voracious reader, he also explored philosophy and was especially drawn to the combination of radical individualism, commitment to social responsibility, and exploration of the nature of Being represented in the metaphysical and existentialist philosophy of Nietzsche. Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre. In anthropology the works of Claude Levi-Strauss stand out in his memory and in sociology he was particularly moved by the spirit of people, with its continuous and unbroken history, "the spirit of the community of the people, " with its continuous and unbroken history, which an integration of Self might be achieved through a phenomenology and philosophy of the Body as the material being of art.1

In the late 1950s, in search of alternatives to Western culture, he also spent hours in the New York Museum of Natural History researching the traditional rituals of non-Western societies. The amalgamation of races and ethnic cultures comprising his own Puerto Rican heritage compelled Ortiz the most. They included Arabic roots in North Africa and the Yacai Indians of Mexico as well as northern Spain, Portuguese, French, and Ireland.

Painting in an Abstract Expressionist style in the late 1950s, Ortiz remembered prying through layers of surface paint as it tried to break through the engravings on a pile of paint-soaked paper towels, he picked up his brush, sunk in, and pulled away layers of the stack of papers. He could observe the hidden interior of the stack and he acknowledged that his expressive painting had been an historical quotation of Abstract Expressionism but that the excavation of the paper towels held the kernel for a more personal art. In addition, the psycho-sexual imagery and erotic connotations he pursued in his paintings became more direct as he began to work through repressed dreams and paint and unlock his sexual energies. He observed and acknowledged that his expressive painting had been an historical quotation of Abstract Expressionism, but that the excavation of the paper towels held the kernel for a more personal art. In addition, the psycho-sexual imagery and erotic connotations he pursued in his paintings became more direct as he began to work through repressed dreams and paint and unlock his sexual energies. He observed and acknowledged that his expressive painting had been an historical quotation of Abstract Expressionism, but that the excavation of the paper towels held the kernel for a more personal art. In addition, the psycho-sexual imagery and erotic connotations he pursued in his paintings became more direct as he began to work through repressed dreams and paint and unlock his sexual energies. He observed and acknowledged that his expressive painting had been an historical quotation of Abstract Expressionism, but that the excavation of the paper towels held the kernel for a more personal art. In addition, the psycho-sexual imagery and erotic connotations he pursued in his paintings became more direct as he began to work through repressed dreams and paint and unlock his sexual energies.

During this period, Ortiz read art periodicals voraciously and noticed his affinity for the Surrealists, whose use of artistic means matched his own.
social and philosophical concerns. The destructive elements which Jean Tinguely and Niki de Saint Phalle introduced into their constructed assemblages resonated for him, but Cesar's crushed automobiles and Annan's use of destructiveness impressed him more for they were created works of their own. The context of art was still present in Tinguely and de Saint Phalle's work. Annan and Cesar had found a more immediate process of destruction/deconstruction, which he sought in his own art. More importantly, all these works supported Ortiz's move away from construction-destination towards pure destruction.

By late 1956, early 1957, he had begun to destroy mattresses and chairs—his earliest Archæological Finds—spaying the results of his destructive action with a feathery touch. Indeed, this attack on the ready-made, his delving into, burrowing through, ripping apart, exposing, and considering the ready-made, represented a personal dialogue with the history of technology and its impact on the arts. By working with the ready-made, Ortiz could also enter the art historical discourse initiated by Marcel Duchamp whose work, the Fountain (1917), literally attacked the very heart of art by challenging the certainty of the unique object (in his dialogue with Duchamp, Ortiz bowed to Duchamp's unprecedented identification of the authority of the mass-produced object over the handcrafted object in the modern era). But, Ortiz simultaneously asserted his own intellect and willful disordering process upon the ready-made by deconstructing the industrial object in order to create it as a false unity and thereby social the multitude of materials and parts which together form that object. Through his destruction, then, Ortiz affirmed the presence of individual creation contained within the ready-made object that obscured presence, the anonymous hand, the diligent designer contained within the technology of the ready-made and the industry of the multiple.

Richard Hartshorne, former Berlin psychiatrist who practiced psychiatry in New York under the pseudonym Dr. Charles Hallock, was impressed by Ortiz's Archæological Finds. He had been introduced to Ortiz's work by Peter Selz, then curator of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art who had visited Ortiz's Cosy Island studio. Hartshorne wrote that Ortiz's destruction works signified "a new concept of space" which expressed an existential dedication of "truth in our time." Ralph Ortz is fascinated by things that aren't or are not yet. Now, to do things that are not yet does not mean that you stop half-way; it may also mean that you do things first in a completed form and then put them into a shape where they are or aren't ever yet. This is exactly what Ralph Ortiz does. His sculptures are things that are not anymore, they may have had a completion, a full revealed vivacity but as they are presented as they want to impress us with something entirely different, namely their experience of destruction. To destroy things means really to create them anew in the space of time... by holding some thing away from his objects. It is the opposite of the machine completed object, the thing that has lost itself while entering our perception or a thing that was torn up by time or some aggressive forces undefinable.

When Ralph Ortiz wants to show us a mattress, he does not show a mattress but an object that is torn up by time or some aggressive forces undefinable. There is an impact of hostility but also an impact of new concept of time and space. Whether it is a mattress or flower-pots or anything, the material really is not playing any important role. What really plays an important role is the artist's thought of the man behind the matrices who has to fight his way through the jungle of his existence. Ralph Ortiz is an existential sculptor and I think one of the most important ones because he has connected some truth about ourselves in our time.

Ralph Ortiz's art was an existential drama which provided him with an important bridge between his destroyed objects and his Destruction Realizations began in 1968. Ortiz had sensitized the existential practices of Maasai and studied ancient Greek and Etruscan ritual shrines in the early 1960s. At that time, he began to see that the activity of demonstrating the presence of furniture was already a performance, the people often gathered at the open door of his studio in Cosy Island to watch him at work.

His awareness of the performative aspect of his destructive process converged with his effort to probe into the surface of materials and the context of materials which concern the ascension psychological components of experience. The coherence of these interests coincided with contemporary developments in painting and sculpture about which his friend, A. Maxine and Ronald, had described his own and other artists' Happenings and Fluxus activities. Ortiz was very interested in the extension of action painting into the event-structuring of the Happening and Fluxus works. He concluded that this work failed to address the essential existential issues which it raised. He remembered:

"Generally speaking, the people who were involved in Happenings in the late 1950s, didn't really go to the source... I saw people playing a lot of games in art. The people that were very serious were not in art, they were in the streets. They were protesting wars, all kinds of social injustice, racism, and later feminism. What I am saying is that the theatre and art became isolated from the realities in the civilization, in the society, and was caught up in the very isolated notion of what art was about, its role, and the role of the artist... So it became clear to me that... the artist was playing some kind of social tragic role like the court jester, in which he would detach himself from social, psychological, social, and sexual problems. Ortiz remained attentive to the dilemmas of his period, believing that the artist has to take responsibility for not taking responsibility, and for not recognizing the role of the artist..."
within the civilization... within the culture. Art, as it operates in the culture now, simply contributes to the madness that exists, to the inability for people to be sensitive in life.

In the earlier stages of his thinking in psychology and anthropology, more than the Happening or Fluxus of other artists, Ortiz compelled people to expand his art into actions. For in action, he might unite his excavatory process in the unconscious and his research into exotic rituals.

His first action took place just following the first DIAS press conference in St. Brieux's Domain, August 31, 1965. Leaving the press and the other artists into the social club for the night, he went out to get a chair. Ortiz, according to a contemporary source, had a fascination with the idea of a chair, reading. He needed the chair and the chair belonged to him. When the manager of the club discovered Ortiz's ownership of the chair, he promptly ordered it out of the place. Ortiz located his chair and instantaneously leapt upon it, with his bare hands, began to systematically tear it to shreds. The shock and simultaneous assertion of Ortiz's action was recorded that night and the following morning in newspapers all over London which screamed such headlines as "Art's Take A Sit. A Chair Is Smashed," and "Chair Destruction Ritual."

At the press conference Ortiz had announced that he would create a Chicken Destruction Ritual. While the DIAS (International Committee for Creative Destruction) had previously experimented with destroying objects, the proposed destruction of the intact chicken had been deemed too dangerous. However, Ortiz, respecting their decision, decided to proceed with his own plan. In an attempt to create a ritualistic event that would involve the chicken, Ortiz ate the chicken. He recorded that night the following morning in newspapers all over London which screamed such headlines as "Art's Take A Sit. A Chair Is Smashed," and "Chair Destruction Ritual."

Several years elapsed before Ortiz actually created a destruction ritual, but around 1961, while gathering material in a junkyard, he found a chicken and destroyed it on the spot. Without considering this action in the context of art, Ortiz was, nevertheless, that he would disregard it. The events which occurred in the ritual were not the result of a deliberate strategy to shatter taboo layers of expression, but rather a spontaneous act of defiance. Ortiz's actions were not meant to be symbolic, but rather to challenge the boundaries of traditional art forms.

White the Chair Destruction ritual was located in London, it was an act in his Piece Bag Destruction Concert, which was a part of his first public exhibition, "Herman Preaching." Ortiz had prepared individuals to participate in his rituals. The Chair Destruction Ritual was performed during the screening of a film that he had produced, which contained footage of him tearing the chicken to shreds. Ortiz found a chicken in a slaughterhouse and proceeded to destroy it in the presence of the audience. The act of destroying the chicken was not an attempt to create a work of art, but rather a provocation to challenge the boundaries of traditional art forms.

The shock and simultaneous thrill of Ortiz's action was recorded that night and the following morning in newspapers all over London which screamed such headlines as "Art's Take A Sit. A Chair Is Smashed," and "Chair Destruction Ritual." Ortiz's actions were not meant to be symbolic, but rather to challenge the boundaries of traditional art forms. The destruction of the chicken was not meant to be an expression of personal anger, but rather a provocation to challenge the boundaries of traditional art forms. Ortiz's actions were not meant to be symbolic, but rather to challenge the boundaries of traditional art forms. The destruction of the chicken was not meant to be an expression of personal anger, but rather a provocation to challenge the boundaries of traditional art forms.
Many people who witnessed Ortiz's actions in London were repulsed. He presented the quintessential "ugly," brash, arrogant, and unrepentant American acting out personal vendettas. Ortiz cultivated these perceptions and admitted that he "sometimes operated in the ... more sensational language of the media," even "muddying people's chances." In order to win an audience to his work and, in the process, reveal the very phenomena he was metaphorically describing in his work, he had read Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964) and was familiar with his notion that the behavior of a whole idea of cultural ritual and the football game that McLuhan put his finger on, all early cultures were full of images of ritual dimensions hidden in culture. As a child he had served as an altar boy, first in the Catholic church and later in the high Episcopal church. He had attended a "Shama" responsible for turning on the light at an Orthodox Jew temple where he had watched menials for high services and listened to the canting with fascination. Also as a boy, he led other children in symbolic battles of dead pets, painting and decorating empty Velveeta cheese boxes with colored and pasting miniature crosses. In pre-school years he had become one of the leading members of a social group, the El Rays, a group of Irish and Italian youths on the Lower East Side of Manhattan who had jacket sewn with their club name on the back and who together mastered the rite of adolescence: shooting pool, talking in packs, drinking, flip-tossing the basketball, and being a doofus. Ortiz was also the school "nerd" with a speech of vowels charged with decorating the blackboards and being the butt of such holiday jokes as, "What do you think of George Washington and the like?" His friends were seated with him in East Harlem and those he witnessed the rough and violent gang-action of such groups as the Communists and the Outcasts, whose gang names he recalled vividly because he remembered "hanging for his life." Another important experience in his "training" as a shaman occurred during the late 1950s when he was still a student of architecture. At that time, as research for a speech on Indian peyote cults in Mexico which he prepared for a class in color, Ortiz experimented with peyote—this legal substance. Experienced Gods, Devils, Violins, and developed four personas with different patterns of imagination which never left him, although he never returned to the use of drugs. Most importantly, the peyote experience induced him into the actual world of the shaman and fixed facet of the Irish. Thereafter, he sought to find a means to make conscious the dreamtime state. Later, the function of the dream along with both thinking became fundamental aspects of his *Physio-Psycho-Alchemy.*

These notions elsewhere that the traditional notion of "shaman" must be re-analyzed in contemporary terms according to the needs of society. And another that the best artists working in media have proved repeatedly that the physical, psychic, and emotional traits of the artist's individual character are made part of the art of action in paint, canvas, stone, metal, as words are in painting and sculpture. And that person in which other very being—fundamentally defines the quality of the art so...
create. and struggle for an authentic identity takes place in a seaco of ideas and images, in a climate of conflicting information, a clash of values, and a general realization of failure. In order for the concept and function of shamans to have relevant contemporary meaning, one must examine what social, ethnic, racial, cultural, and political circumstances have contributed to a certain individual's ability to access fluent and powerful communicative capabilities—especially in electronically mediated Western society where few persons invest belief in the individual and at the same time hold up the individual as the ideal. This is precisely what Ortiz had done.


The Life and Death of Henry Pons took place in New York at the Four Horse Gallery run by Jerry Saltzman. A woman, dressed and costumed in Ortiz's concept of an "upper-class debutante type," stood in the space draped in a bedspread resembling a long gown. She softly uttered "Daddy." In various tones and resolutions, Ortiz was positioned under the bedspread with an air pump attached to a contact microphone. As the woman continued to softly and expressively repeat the word "Daddy," Ortiz began to play a grandson which had been attached to the bed. As the body fell to the floor, the pump kicked in, and the woman began to stand up and walk.

During the performance, Ortiz's Piano Destruction Concert was for Ortiz a vehicle for empathically expressing, in an explosive way, the "cliché of life." He recalled the musical, emotional sounds evoking feelings of anguish, desire, pain, and terror, when he had destroyed the piano in the junk yard during the early 1960s. He remembered the screaming sounds of the Orthodox Jews' canting. His Piano Destruction Concerts were created to represent, through waves of sound, the physical sensations and mental vibrations of sorrow at destruction, of pity at psychic suffering, of adversity, plight, disaster, and affliction, of collapse and failure, of the intense aching endurance of the denied, the abandoned, the forgotten, the neglected, the anxious, and the heartbroken and controlled, and finally the note that accompanies all destruction.

Henry Pons Piano Destruction Concert with Paper Bag Destruction began with people gathered and seated amidst Ortiz's Archaeological Finds. Each person was given a little piece of paper to blow up and explode, thereby exciting the nervous system. During the general delirium of this part of the event, a chicken was passed among the audience to handle. When the people began boiling the bag at one another and a person started to be degraded, Ortiz collected the chicken and Macro handed it to the participants. Ortiz began to carefully and gently clean the piano with the live chicken whose body, when brushed along the keys, began the piano. When the chicken was dead, he began his piano destruction with one axe. At a certain point, he put the axe down, picked up the chicken carcass, and continued the destruction with the chicken, beating against the top of the piano. He completed the destruction ritual to the end with the axe.

In his search for a profound means by which to communicate the physical and psychological brutality of destruction and for a "more visceral way to relate to art," Ortiz introduced the destruction of chickens into several of his rituals. The chicken has always been associated with folk culture, again whose traditions and myths Ortiz drew heavily. He had witnessed his grandmother, during a natural part of the domestic process, kill chickens for food. He also faithfully studied Mexican Indian ritual chickens for food. Because he had destroyed the chicken's image, the destruction act when practiced on the living animal, he selected an animal common to both culture, folk traditions, and folk practices.
delivering the chickens to wholesale distribution houses. Ortiz realized that he had to make...
Kurt von Meier, an art critic and historian, then working in Los Angeles. At a certain point, our conversation began to get too heated, and we parted ways for a few minutes until another one. Given by Ortiz, signaled a quiet, a "tragic moment." Ortiz wrote:

"We took precautions against people disordering from my conversation but the question remains. As I made my way through the crowd of critics, I thought I heard a woman say, 'Are you sure about the fact that you had held the destruction of text in place?' I completed the Piano Destruction Concert and returned to them with a large white crate (for the Piano Trap Event). As I passed the Steer Bacon, I realized it as a failure. I couldn't smell the burning of fabric... I shot, "Make a fire..."

The destruction was moving along well, I got into the main room where the audience was standing and among the leading hands of the initiates. The direct question of the human brain was a bloody, living color; an absence of a whole mind's myth of death being slowly disposed of by the fire..."

As Ortiz passed the photographs with the Spanish romantic playing, he nodded upon his way to the piano and entered the photographs, and then he began to work out the music on the piano. Blood was drawn on the piano "sacrosancting the damage." Ortiz followed this action by picking up a large box of live mice, handing them to his initiators, and returned to the room. He was exhausted from the concentration, dedication, and the need to remain "authentic" and he acknowledged the completion of some of his actions (especially the Chickens Destruction Ritual) with the theory of a healing art. He also understood that using the chicken as his ritual was a failure and this would be a lesson for the next time. Furthermore, he no longer wanted to spend his energy in the same way of a ritual that was so easily disrupted in the midst of a ritual rather than the healing ritual.

"Ortiz explained, where highly developed mythen and ritual experiences, socially constructed individuality, and the lack of cultural norms for expressive experience, the dream, especially as it is created by the conscious mind, might work through impulses of the unconscious ego in psychoanalytical which manifests the latent content of the unconscious desire, the assistive elements, representations, and the manifestation which manifests drives and intentions into a cultural symptom, as early as 1963 in a theoretical paper, "A New Philosophy of Art." Ortiz wrote:

"But it is because the dream, body and spirit, to all our processes of imagination of our mind, body and spirit, to all our processes of re-creation, is the most difficult thing to discover, to solve, to understand. As art emerges with our conscious effort, the first artists emerged who remembered their dream mythic creations."
The initiate is instructed by Ortiz (still in the shamanic quiet holding a plastic beach ball between his/her knees) to continue to breathe and squeeze. The body begins to wobble. As the initiate sustains the squeezing, breathing action, sets the body in a flexing motion that, if the initiate is able to sustain, is understood metaphorically as living in which the initiate becomes an artist, an artist who is here or herself the "art material, the work of art in progress, an art which is transgressive" and serves "as a critique, as a means of rearticulating our mind body, and spirit of our past, present, and future." In this process, the initiate in the "primal authenticating link to the magic" of mind, body, and spirit. Art becomes a kind of "metaphysical choreography, an intersection of cognitive and unconscious processes, the dynamics of which are also iconic in folk art, fantasy, mythology, dreams, art, and the metaphysics of imagery." It presents "Psycho-Psycho-Alchemy," a process which releases one's ultimate existential consciousness, so that the mind may know it and co-operate in its evolution.

Process Healing has situated the metaphysical speculation within the discourse of modern science and mathematical practice since the 1920s, when it became associated with Sir William Rowan's theory of "Action Principle," a fundamental principle of Heisenberg's quantum mechanics, the quantum Klein's equation, quantum mechanics, and quantum field theory. In Process Healing (1929), the British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead drew on Bergson, Bradley, and William James to develop his notion that the empirical world is formed by a cosmology. Within this rational and metaphysical context,, consciousness transforms and transcendent qualities to which Whitehead's "sympathetic" and "sympathetic" are genuinely recovered from its unity, another in a sequence of "becoming." Consciousness is the formation of a "pure" substance arising from and within overlapping experiences. Whitehead's philosophical project paralleled Einstein's theory of relativity and the "cosmic" principle of "process" is the phenomenon that links Whitehead's principles of action in physics and mathematics and equally frames the philosophical speculation of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre into its future. The interdisciplinary attention to action and process could not have failed to be unilaterally divergent and mutually exclusive in the body of the precise mathematical equations of quantum physics and in the intersecting settings on the floor of a group session, as did "Therapy" enacting Arthur Janov's Primal Scare. In art, Ortiz's attention to the processes of authentication as action and event in the regions of aesthetic where individual attention to healing processes holds the key to regenerative communicative capacities of the authentic self. Through the agency of psychological and physical action, Ortiz helped to devise the conscious ego in order to claim the "knowing" perception in the mind, its Psycho-Psycho-Alchemy, then art becomes a consciousness, an art complex, and interweave into the linear hierarchical investigation of an advance in science, philosophy, and psychology to which Ortiz is both indebted and to which he has contributed.

III.

 Destruction Art and Psycho-Psycho-Alchemy represent Ortiz's contribution to a broad view of contemporary art history. Destruction Art took place during the period when formalism criticism and Minimal Art reached an apex of international influence in the arts. These values for which Ortiz stood and the art which he produced remain acknowledged as a formidable opposition to the postmodern aesthetic ideology which shaped that period and which, manifest in "postmodern" criticism, remains dominant today. The significant resistance Ortiz launched against such self-destructive, socially disengaged art accounts for, in part, for the absence of Ortiz from most art historical accounts of the period. An examination of Ortiz's work (a departure from Destruction Art) presents Ortiz's contribution to the complex interaction of art historical accounts of the period would collapse the linear system of art history which constructs, even in the guise of previous engagement of aspects of critical theory, the concept of a dominant "art canon." This work will never be presented in the dominant and curatorial directions ofollerminator's remembrance, insufficiency, and lack of transcendence. The destruction Art demonstrates its contingency and social and cultural conditions of the period at the same time as a revelatory instance to reveal the destructive patterns which it seeks to redirect.
A critical aspect of the continuity of Ortiz's Destruction Art is the association with mid-20th-century existential and anti-psychological philosophy, which he would later integrate into what he called "Physico-Psychology," the Neo-Comtean philosophy of the mid-1960s. Ortiz also cites, with enthusiasm and respect, the writings of the American intellectual Ralph Ellison, who, in his novel "Invisible Man," explores the theme of the "search for self" in the context of American society. Ortiz's work, like that of other artists of the same period, reflects a desire to break away from the traditional institutions and values of society. Ortiz uses art as a means to shake up the consciousness of the viewer, to make them question their assumptions and values. Ortiz's work is characterized by a sense of abstraction and detachment, a desire to distance the viewer from the immediate, everyday world. Ortiz's work is also marked by a sense of irony and detachment, a desire to comment on the absurdity of the modern world. Ortiz's work is a commentary on the political and social conditions of his time, and it is through this work that he attempts to challenge the status quo and bring about change. Ortiz's work is a reflection of his own experiences and struggles, and it is through this work that he attempts to bring about a change in society and its values.
I was destroyed. Art, KS. Ortiz described artists who work with destruction as “destroyers, materialists, and sensualists dealing with process directly” and he identified “survival or stabilizing purpose.” He compared art to the dream, which “cannot be censored,” whose comment is “neither inherently good nor inherently bad.” Ortiz claimed, “Art is a social evidence of the social nature” and he described the artistic community as “the destruction of art today.”

Recollections of DIAS, 1966. Unpublished early chronology of DIAS events including descriptions of his own and other participating artists’ actions, KS.

“Art’s Sub Destruction,” East Village Observer (New York), 1 (December 1-15, 1966). Oriz drew upon but altered Marc’s belief that “Religion is the opiate of the people.” In a criticism of artists who failed to come to terms with destruction art and thereby get “their consciousness dirty,” he wrote: “Art is the opiate.” Art, he explained, belongs to the egos of “natural, educated and asexual” and even the most “degenerate” can get their play.

“Destruction Theater Manifesto,” February 1967, KS. Destruction Theater. Oriz wrote, addressed aggressions by the way the artist transforms and distances his life events …”

Letter to Mario Amaya, editor of Art and Artists, with statements accompanying the illustrations of Chile Destruction, 1965. Special issue on “Anti-Destructive Art,” Art and Artists, 1 (April 1966). Recalling philosophical musings by Kant and Sartre regarding the nature of appearances and things-in-themselves, Oriz wrote: “Each artist takes away from the consciousness of the chair the torment of its complexity internal to all things.” Each swing unmakes this mode thing, a self-liberated chair, each destruction unmakes my mode relationship to it.

“Destructionism: Second Manifesto,” London 1966, excerpted in Studio International 172 (December 1966). Two pages, monograph in which Ortiz handed out an loose leaflet DIAS, September 11, 1966. Ortiz enumerated biological and natural aspects of destruction that serve no apparent “survival or stabilizing purpose,” i.e. cancer, volcanic eruptions, tornadoes. Evolution is a destructive “adjustment” and “survival is destruction inevitably possible through psychological evolution.” Within this framework, “destructivists put our destruction instant in their essential expression while coming to terms with destruction’s most primitive and instinctive aspects.” By bridging this gap between the good and the evil, art assists the evolutionary limitations of our species without transforming the biological or psychological survival.

“On the First Fighting Pacifist,” 1966. Unpublished rebuttal responding to criticism of DIAS in an article by Roger Lane in Peace Now. DIAS: Playing With Fire? Peace Now, London 7 (December 1966). KS, Ortiz compared Destruction Art to the dream which “cannot be censored,” whose comment is “neither inherently good nor inherently bad.” Ortiz claimed, “Art is the social evidence of the social nature” and he described the artistic community as “the destruction of art today.”

Reconstructions of DIAS, 1966. Unpublished early chronology of DIAS events including descriptions of his own and other participating artists’ actions, KS.

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sive urges allowing art to achieve a "responsible" role in "civilization" and to evolve cultural rituals which might "allocate" beauty to a "symbolic theater of suffering."}

**Destruction Theater Manifesto—Destruction Reali-
cation of all the hostile destructive urges" and an art
which touches obsessive secrets and "threatens to
ignore the cause of the prison, the insane asylum, and
the death penalty." Ortiz explained. He added, "If society
does not act quickly, it will be too late to see the
problems, but the art of destruction should be what he
called the "humanitarian" and development
of our extra-sensory processes as the "final phase of
art as a correctional process."

**Psycho-Analytic Art**

Towards an Authori-
"Art and the Invisible Reality: A Manifesto," a

**Books including the Artist**

_Art Happening: A Primer of Time & Space Art,
New York: Something Else Press, 1965._ Includes ci-
tations of Ortiz’s participation in DIAS.

_Art, the Total Image, Theories & Techniques,
The Carefree Motif, New York: Penguin Publish-
ers, 1970._ Includes citations of Ortiz’s contribu-
tions to the Guerrilla Art Action Group.

_Art in the Third World: Papers and Essays,
New York: Printed Matter, Inc., 1978._ Includes ci-
tations of Ortiz’s participation in DIAS.

**Art and the Invisible Reality:** A Manifesto, writ-

**Destruction Theater Manifesto—Destruction Reali-
yed elaboration of Ortiz’s Destructivism Manifesto
including scores for Destruction Room and Brainwash cen-
ter of 12:00 Events of Manipulations,” Judaism,
Church, October 1967.

**Destruction Past & Present:** New York: Fordham
University, 1967. A pamphlet accompanying the exhibi-
tion, "The Computer and Art," and "Cultural Revo-

**A Selection of His Work:** New York: Printed
Matter, Inc., 1978. Includes citations of
Ortiz’s participation in DIAS.

**The Computer and Art:** September 1982. Unpub-
lished essay, KS. The earliest version of this essay was
first given at the 73rd College Regional Conference on
Prison Cultural Experience held at the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, 1985. Discussions of Ortiz’s participation in DIAS.

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first given at the 73rd College Regional Conference on
Prison Cultural Experience held at the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, 1985. Discussions of Ortiz’s participation in DIAS.
I. Historical context and analysis of the art historical and social significances of the images of Diana and theaters of the world, the work of the principal participants, among them Rafael Ortiz, Jean Jacques Lebel, Haim Avnir, Olinka Batic, Joni Min, Peter Weibel, Karl Krab, John Wilbourn, John Webster, and Yoko Ono. This text also includes the first biography, aesthetic philosophy, and history of Connie Meurer, founder of the series "Art of Auto-Destructive Art (1959)."

II. Exhibition Particles and Catalogues Including the Artist

**Young America 1965: Thity Artists Under Thirty**

**The Art of Destruction in America**

**The Life and Death of Salvador Dali**

**Arte y Escenas**


Forthcoming Writings On or Including the Artist


**The Life and Death of Salvador Dali**

**Arte y Escenas**


Forthcoming Writings On or including the Artist

**Rafael Ortiz**
- "Interview with Ortiz,"* c. mid-1970. Unpublished, undated interview, KS. Discussion of the evolution of Ortiz's destruction concepts and the nature of violence in art and life.

**Kristine Stiles**
- "Interview with Rafael Ortiz,"* February 27 and May 4, 1962. In addition to the interview with Rafael Ortiz, this article features an interview with the artist in 1961, discussing his work and contributions to the Destruction Art movement. Highlighting his role in promoting an understanding of the destructive potential of art and its impact on society.

**Kristine Stiles**


Forthcoming Writings On or including the Artist

**Rafael Ortiz**
- "Interview with Ortiz,"* c. mid-1970. Unpublished, undated interview, KS. Discussion of the evolution of Ortiz's destruction concepts and the nature of violence in art and life.

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- "Interview with Rafael Ortiz,"* February 27 and May 4, 1962. In addition to the interview with Rafael Ortiz, this article features an interview with the artist in 1961, discussing his work and contributions to the Destruction Art movement. Highlighting his role in promoting an understanding of the destructive potential of art and its impact on society.

**Kristine Stiles**


a nuclear destruction retaliation performed at Evergreen State College. Later called the new theatre audience able to respond, create, and take responsibility for meaning and continuing artistic attainment, by such artists as Ortiz, rather than an audience which passively accepted events, with govern and government.

Lil Picard, "Kill For Peace," Art Magazine 11 (March 1967). A review of Ortiz's Life and Death of White Henny, which Picard called a "demonstration of Cowardice," at the Evergreen State College. Picard quoted Ortiz: "The only pathive framing, his struggle must make a noise, innovation..." When destroying, I believe myself and mankind from the guilt and dilemma that comes from the destructiveness of everyday life. Whether the war or the ulcer.


Lil Picard, "Destruction Rituals," Evergreen 11 (April 1967). Picard described Ortiz as the leader of The Destructionists and described Ortiz's theoretical underpinnings as "leapfrogging over the dead and destructive agents in history of the destruction movement."

A review of video exhibition including mention of Ortiz's video-laser works.

David Shney, "The Destructions," Evergreen 11 (April 1967). Shney reviewed the video exhibition, which included a photograph of Ortiz and his video-laser works. Shney described Ortiz's theoretical underpinnings as "leapfrogging over the dead and destructive agents in history of the destruction movement."

Charlotte Wilk, "Violence and Art," Evergreen 11 (April 1967). Wilk described Ortiz's theoretical underpinnings as "leapfrogging over the dead and destructive agents in history of the destruction movement."

Newspaper Articles Including the Artist:

[List of newspaper articles mentioning Ortiz's art and destructions]


"Art as Candy," Precognition (Provincetown, Provincetown, August 30, 1965). Review of Ortiz's candy assemblages, combining their benign qualities with his destructive works.


"Chicken Killer Says Ban Won't Deter Him," New York Times International Edition, September 2, 1966. Brief report that the DIA's would not sponsor the destruction of an installation that Ortiz would realize his Chair Destruction outside of the context of DIAS.

Edward Lucie-Smith, "Things Seen: Predilections of an Art Critic," The Times (London), September 13, 1966. Reviewing DIAS, Lucie-Smith explained the problematic task of criticizing new and difficult art. He concluded that the artistic experiment was sympathetic, tentative, and very rebellious, proving a negative conclusion about modern art.

Peter Schjeldahl, "Another Season," Village Voice, September 15, 1966. Review of DIAS, citing various participants, among them Ortiz, and criticizing artists producing Destruction Art for being "naive moralists who value good intentions."


Jay Landesman, "Creating Destruction as an Art Form," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, October 5, 1966. Review of DIAS describing Ortiz's Chair Destruction and other actions at DIAS.


"Twenty-Five Award," Weekly Telegraph (London), December 16, 1966. Notice announcing that Ralph Ortiz had received the "Twenty-Five Award" from the magazine for creating the best aesthetic conflicts of 1966.


John Crosby, "Take me to your Old Master," Observer Review (London), March 5, 1967. The author described the market value of an masterpiece, quoting sales prices at Sotheby's of such works as Gainsborough's The Blue Boy. Describing Ortiz's smashed piano and ripped material, the author called Ortiz's Chair Destruction a "violent attack on the possession of Jay Landesman's Crosby hypothesis that in fifty years appartaining £100,000 will be seen.

Jud Yalkut, "Conversations with Ralph Ortiz," Washington News, September 28, 1967. Essay on Ortiz with long quotes by the artist in which Ortiz cited Silvano Arieti, director of the William Albone Whit Institute of Psychotherapy and researcher in concepts of schizophrenia, as a primary source for his exploration into the visceral, primitive, pathological systems associated with "early ideas" development and their relationship to "nice brain" development in logical, Aristotelian systems as a means to address the complex phenomena of individual disturbances and creative impulses.


Ortiz's The Life and Death of White Hell, at Foster White's, 777 Sixth Avenue.

Martine Bianco, "Local Art ... Amazements," The Village (New York), October 15, 1967. Review of 12 Performances of Manipulations, describing Ortiz's Destruction Room as "a landscape beyond Art's awareness, daring, and powerful," and歌颂ing thinking and inquiry into the art of art as a field to turn from aggression.

Ortiz's The Life and Death of White Hell, at Foster White's, 777 Sixth Avenue.

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Ortiz's The Life and Death of White Hell, at Foster White's, 777 Sixth Avenue.

Lil Peale, "Art," East Village Other (January 5, 1968). Review of Ortiz's exhibition of several Archeological Finds and Destruction Realization Concert at Fordham University. Peale described Ortiz as the "most talented, gifted, and discussed Avant-garde in New York," who is an "educator and teacher," and an "extremely aware, daring, and powerful" artist, provoking thinking and inquiry into the art of art as a field to turn from aggression.

Ortiz's The Life and Death of White Hell, at Foster White's, 777 Sixth Avenue.
Saul Gottlieb, "Yesterday Whitehead Tomorrow the Finch Musuem," East Village Other, April 5-11, 1968. A passionate defense of Jean-Jacques Lebel by Gottlieb who authenticated Lebel's position as a socially radical artist against Lillian Rieff's allegations that Lebel was a revolutionary ultranationalist. Gottlieb cited a letter from the artist to the editor of the East Village Other that Gottlieb considered definitive of Lebel's political beliefs.

Joseph Rock and Jay Levin, "Hippies Put on a Museum Show," New York Post, March 26, 1968. A review of a Dada-inspired exhibition at the Finch College Museum, which Gottlieb and other DADA artists participated in. The exhibition included works by Joseph Beuys, Jean-Paul Riopelle, and other artists who were part of the DADA movement.


Barbara Cole, "Destruction Art at Finch," The Sun (Philadelphia), May 19, 1968. A review of the exhibition "Destruction Art at Finch College Museum," which included works by artists such as Joseph Beuys and Jean-Paul Riopelle.


Lil Picard, "From Lil with Love," East Village Other, April 5-11, 1968. A review of the exhibition "Destruction Art at Finch College Museum," which included works by artists such as Joseph Beuys and Jean-Paul Riopelle.

Ortiz's theory that the use of destruction in art is an intent to redirect aggressive instincts.

One must find and understand their own insanity. One must educate oneself to one's own madness.


Candace Burke Black, "Destruction Art: His/Heris Featured at the Museum," Fitch News, June 9, 1968. Review of Destruction Art Finch College Museum with a quote by Ortiz: "Western art wants to make everyone sane. With Destruction Art everyone can, if they should, find and understand their own insanity. One must educate oneself to one's own madness.


"For an encore, shoot the audience,..." The Province (Vancouver, B.C.), August 29, 1968. A sympathetic review of Ortiz's ritual at the Douglas Gallery in Vancouver featuring several passages from Ortiz's "Destruction Theater" Mattressa.


Candace Burke Black, "Destruction Art: His/Heris Featured at the Museum," Fitch News, June 9, 1968. Review of Destruction Art Finch College Museum with a quote by Ortiz: "Western art wants to make everyone sane. With Destruction Art everyone can, if they should, find and understand their own insanity. One must educate oneself to one's own madness.


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There are today throughout the world a handful of artists working in a way which is truly unique in art history. There is an art which separates the makers from the machines, the assemblers from the disassemblers, the constructors from the destructors. These artists are destroyers, materialists, and sensualists dealing with process directly. These artists are destructivists and do not pretend to play at God's happy game of creation, on the contrary, the artist is a response to the prevailing will to kill. It is not the trauma of birth which concerns the destructivist. He understands that there is no need for magic in living. It is one's sense of death which needs the life-giving immersion of transcendental ritual.

We who use the process of destruction understand above all the desperate need to retain unconscious integrity. We point to ourselves in distress, shouting the revelation, that anger and anguish which hide behind the quiet face is service of death, a death which is more than spiritual. The artist must give warning, his struggle must make a noise, it must be a signal. Our screams of anguish and anger will control our faces and bodies, our shouts will be "to hell with death," our sciences will make a noise that will shake the heavens and hell. Of this stuff our art is, that which is made will be undone, that which is assembled will be disassembled, that which is constructed will be destructed. The artist will cease to be the lackey, his process will cease to be humiliated by a morality which only has meaning in reality. The artist's sense of destruction will no longer be turned inward in fear. The art that utilizes the destructive process will purge, for as it gives the quiet face is in service of death, a death which is more than spiritual. The artist must give warning, his process will cease to be humiliated by a morality which only has meaning in reality. The artist's sense of destruction will no longer be turned inward in fear. The art that utilizes the destructive process will purge, for as it gives

Computer-Laser-Video, by Rafael Montañez Ortiz, 1984

Through my computer programming, I interactively determine not only which laser-video disc frames occur and record on the videotape, but in what numbers, sequence, and speed they occur. This process involves transforming and reassembling any and all parts of a storyline, directly restructuring the space and expectation in continuity of events of the film and video footage on the Laser-Disc. It is a structural reorganizing and/or disorganizing of the existing logic of visual and languages.

In all this free full of fractured time, space, and images of my work, special attention is paid to language and the emotional impact of its visual words fractured into fragments become, in a free association of phenomena, a Rorschach imaging of words, a Rorschach imaging of meaning. By releasing language and gesture from their Platonic and Aristotelian logic, I release language and gesture to its visceral, to its non-logical exaggerated meaning and meaninglessness.

In my video work, I seek to suspend time, to magnify the more essential displacement, a greater distance. The real car might have run over a real puppy or with still greater symbolic distance, a real cardboard box. The real child might do what he really do? Will he push a button and annihilate 200 million people, push an old lady down the stairs, or run over a real puppy or with still greater symbolic distance, a real cardboard box. The real child might do what he really do? Will he push a button and annihilate 200 million people, push an old lady down the stairs, or run over a real puppy or with still greater symbolic distance, a real cardboard box.


dated film segments that are the source of my works become editorially available after I transfer them to a Laser-Disc to which I have frame structure interactive access through a computer interface to Laser-Disc. It is a process in which I disassemble and reassemble any and all parts of a storyline, directly restructuring the time space and expectation in continuity of events of the film and video footage on the Laser-Disc. It is a structural reorganizing and/or disorganizing of the existing logic of visual and languages.
Rafael Montanez Ortiz
Born: January 30, 1934
Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.

Academic Degrees
1964 M.F.A.-Prall Institute, Brooklyn, N.Y.
1964 B.S. Art Education-Prall Institute, Brooklyn, N.Y.
1975 Ed.M. Master’s-Columbia University Teachers College, New York
1986

Museum Collections
1988 Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Computer-Laser-Video Dance Works
1987 Musée d’Art Moderne, Brussels, Computer-Laser-Video Dance Works 1-6
1985 Friedrichshof Museum, Zumdorf, Austria, Computer-Laser-Video
1984 Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, N.Y., Computer-Laser-Video
1984 El Museo del Barrio, New York, Computer-Laser-Video
1983 Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, N.Y., Sculpture
1982 El Museo del Barrio, New York, Sculpture
1981 Finch College Museum of Art, New York, Sculpture
1981 Museum of Modern Art, New York, Sculpture
1979 Museum of Modern Art, New York, Sculpture

Computer-Laser-Video Exhibitions
1987 Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne
Moosvideo, Holland Distribution contract for computer-laser-video, Amsterdam
Vidéo Festival Genova
Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster
"Monster X" Festival, Pinhale/S, Sweden
Offensive Video, Dortmund, West Germany
Künstler Klub, Budapest
Hillcrest, Hong Kong
Video Biennale, Barcelona
Experimental Workshop, Osnabrück, West Germany
Volkshochschule, Wuppertal, West Germany
Saw Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Platte, Moscow
Tarun Mazák, Dakova
Filmstiftung, Ås, Denmark
Finnish Filminstitut, Helsinki-Talvivaara
Armada, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
Weaver’s, Hamburg
P.R.I.M., Montreal
Video Feed, Winnipeg
Monitor North, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada
EM media, Calgary
Bosner Kunstverein, Bonn
Vanessa Art Gallery, Vancouver, B.C.
LACE, Los Angeles
Observe, Quebec
Galeries d’Art de Montréal, Montréal, Quebec, Canada
911, Sante, Wolf
Open Space, Victoria, B.C.
Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, Alberta, Canada

Performances
1987 Physio-Psycho-Alchemy, Wilhelmshaven, Museum of the Arts, Munich
1986 Physio-Psycho-Alchemy, Pistoia di Casa Strofilde, Bologna, Valenza, Italy
1985 Balcones Museum, Austin, The Netherlands
1984 Offensive Video Kunst, and Kommunales Kino, Dortmund, West Germany
1983 E.A.I., New York and Videonale, Bonn
1983 Union College Tomelloso Gallery, Cranford, N.J.
1983 Public Theater, New York
1982 Fashion Institute of Technology, New York
1981 Paul Reuben Gallery, Newark, N.J.
1980 Clancy Paul, Princeton, N.J.
1980 Rutgers University Faculty Exhibitions, New Brunswick, N.J.

Berlin Film Festival
A Space, Toronto
The Kitchen, New York
Experimental Film Festival, Osnabrück, West Germany
The Netherlands, The Hague, The Netherlands
707 E.V., Frankfurt
Kommunales Kino, Dortmund, West Germany
Imagic and Sound Festival, The Hague, The Netherlands
Videolatino, West Germany
Elektron, Cologne
Bouwkaarten, Museum, Maastricht, The Netherlands
Thesko, Pinch Bizzell, Dortmund, West Germany
Cafe Frise, Hebrer-Haus, Dortmund, West Germany
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1987 Physio-Psycho-Alchemy, Wilhelmshaven, Museum of the Arts, Munich
1986 Physio-Psycho-Alchemy, Pistoia di Casa Strofilde, Bologna, Valenza, Italy
1985 Balcones Museum, Austin, The Netherlands
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Paul Reuben Gallery, Newark, N.J.
Clancy Paul, Princeton, N.J.
1967
Performer, TV, Johnny Carson, New York
Theater Ritual, Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa
Ritual, Dias, U.S.A., Judson Church, New York
Performer, TV, John Carson, New York
Theater Ritual, Douglas Gallery, Vancouver, B.C.
Performer, TV, Allan Burke, New York
Piano-Destruct Concert, West German TV
Piano-Destruct Concert, Riverside Radio, New York
Ritual Performance, Fordham University, New York
Piano-Destruct Concert, WBAI Radio, New York
Piano-Destruct Concert, Pacifica Radio, San Francisco
Performance, TV, Bitter End Cafe, New York
Stage Performance, New York
Eros-Thanatos Ritual, Youth Pavilion, Exposition 1967, Montreal
Annual New York Avant Garde Festival

1966
Kosmos Dadd, BBC TV piano concert, London
Mercury Theater, London

Museum Group Exhibitions: Performance
1987
Physio-Psycho-Alchemy, Volkskunde Museum, Gallery of the Artists, Munich

Museum Group Exhibitions
1982
El Musco del Barrio, New York
1981 "Ancient Roots and New Visions," Palacio de Mineria, Mexico City
1979
Exhibition of Art, Synnace, N.Y.
San Antonio Museum Association, San Antonio, Tex.
Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art
1978
Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, N.M.
1977
El Musco del Barrio, New York
Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson, Az.
National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.
1976
Museum of Modern Art, New York
El Musco del Barrio, New York
1973
Exhibition of Art, Synnace, N.Y.
Exhibition, Chrysler Art Museum, Provincetown, Mass.
"Young America 1965," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
1969 CORE Invitational, Brooklyn Museum of Arts
1968 Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal
Andrew D. White Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
Traveling Assemblage Show, USA and Canada, Museum of Modern Art, New York
Isaac Delgado Museum of Art, New Orleans

Group Exhibitions
1987
Documentation of "Arte Sella-fit," Munich
1986
Francisco Core Artwork Gallery
1. Wine Cabinet, Verona, Italy
2. Piano, Merano Velan, Italy
3. Piano Stool and Sheet Music, Merano, Italy

"Esculturas Escogidas," Fundo de Sol Visual Arts and Media Center, Washington, D.C.
1978
Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery
Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston
Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colo.
1977
Eise de Sol Visual Arts and Media Center, Washington, D.C.
1976
Collection of Gallery, Fundo de Sol Visual Arts and Media Center, Washington, D.C.
1975
Howangs, Columbia University, New York
1974
"Three Photographers," Fine Arts Center, Castleton, Vt.
"Hispanic Artists," Association of the Arts Council, New York
1971
"Different Traffic," Long Island University, New York
1970
Scalpoe, Fordham University, New York
1968
COFF Invitational, Griggs & Wadell, New York
DIAS, Art Symposium Exhibition, Africa Center and Better Books, London
1967
Peasy Candy Assemblage, Barrett's Candy Store, Provincetown, Mass.
1964
Park Place Gallery, New York
Contemporary Sculpture Show, Welfare Island, N.Y.
San Francisco State College
Detroit Institute of Arts
University of South Florida, Tampa
1963
Hunting Art Gallery, Medekanstå, Vch.
Tulane Art Center, Tuscon, Ariz.
Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
Indiana University, Bloomington
1962
"Five from New York," Boston Museum of Fine Art School
East and West Coast Landscape Shows, Belles Galery, New York
New York Sculpture and Painting, Reale Gallery, New York
1961
Artist Gallery, New York
Works in the Exhibition

Sculpture

Sunburst, 1960
Construction destruction, paper towel, staples, oil paint on cardboard
60" x 40" Collection of the artist

Arrcheological Find #3, 1961
Burnt Mattress Destruction on wooden backing
5' 2-7/8" x 41-1/4" x 9-3/4" Collection of the Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Constance Kane, 1961

Monument to Buchenwald, 1961
Paper, earth, shoes, mixed media on wood destruction
29-7/8" x 28" x 6-7/8" Collection of Menil Collection

Cloud Burst, 1961
Construction destruction, staples, paper towel, lacquer on cardboard
84" x 54" x 24" Collection of the artist

Water Lilies
Destroyed sofa, wood, cotton, wire, vegetable fiber, and glue on wooden backing
29-7/8" x 28" x 6-7/8" Collection of the artist

Archaeological Find #22, 1961
Destroyed upholstered sofa, synthetic fiber, cotton, wire, glue on wooden backing
38-1/2" x 31" x 30" x 17" Collection of the artist

Children of Treblinka, 1962
Painted, burnt shoes, black paint on wooden backing
47" x 33" x 8" Collection of Dr. Robert Schwartz

Archeological Find #5, 1964
Destroyed upholstered sofa on wooden backing
68" x 63" x 34" Collection of the Everson Museum
Symposia, New York

Archaeological Find #15, 1966
PAper, earth, burnt shoes, black paint on wooden backing
17" x 14' 5" x 5" Collection of the artist

Physio-Psycho-Alchemy Ritual No. 333, 1988
Destruction of furniture and sundry objects with audience participation
120" x 15' 3" x 22' 6" x 8' 5" Collection of Duncan Terrace Piano Destruction Concert, London, England, 1966

Photographer: John Potter

Installation

Homage to Huelsenbeck, 1988
Recollection of piano destruction from the 1960s
24" x 15' 3" x 12' 6" x 8' 5" Collection of the artist

PIano Destruction, Fordham University, New York City, 1966
Photographs from the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Installation

Physio-Psycho-Alchemy Ritual No. 333, 1988
Recollection of destruction rituals from the 1960s
7' 8" x 9' 8" x 14' 5" Collection of the artist

Production of an image

Installation

Physio-Psycho-Alchemy Ritual No. 333, 1988
Recollection of destruction rituals from the 1960s
7' 8" x 9' 8" x 14' 5" Collection of the artist

Installation

Physio-Psycho-Alchemy Ritual No. 333, 1988
Recollection of destruction rituals from the 1960s
7' 8" x 9' 8" x 14' 5" Collection of the artist

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Homage to Huelsenbeck, 1988
Recollection of piano destruction from the 1960s
24" x 15' 3" x 12' 6" x 8' 5" Collection of the artist
Photo Captions

Front cover Chair Destruction, 1965 Truro Beach, Cape Cod, MA
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Inside front cover Destruction Theater, 1969 Hollywood, CA at Ace Gallery
Photo: Irwin Glaser
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Title page Duncan Terrace Mattress Destruction for DIAS, 1966 London, England Collection of Jay Landesman
Photo: John Prosser

Page 5 Archaeological Find #31, 1965 Murray Mattress on wooden backing Collection of the Artist

Page 6 Moctezuma (Exploiting Chair), 1963 Destroyed upholstered sofa on wooden backing Collection of the Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY

Page 7 Archaeological Find #9, 1964 Destroyed upholstered furniture, plastic, glass, glue, steel 77" x 64" x 23" New Line Collection, Collection of Whitney Museum of American Art Gift of George and Lillian Schwartz

Page 9 Henny Penny Piano Destruction, 1967 Studio Invitational, New York City

Page 11 Monument to Buchenwald, 1961 Burned shoes and mixed media on wood 29-7/8" x 28" x 6-7/8"

Page 13 Archaeological Find #3, 1965 Rural Mattress Destruction on wooden backing 15" x 14-1/2" x 9-1/4" Collection, Museum of Modern Art Gift of Constance Kane, 1963

Page 16-17 Henny Penny Piano Destruction, 1967

Page 19 Chair Destruction for Charlie Casher, London, 1966
Photo: John Prosser
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Pages 20-21 The Birth and Death of White Henry, 1967, Ecco Homo Gallery
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Page 23 The Birth and Death of White Henry, 1967, Ecco Homo Gallery
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Pages 26-27 Artist Workers’ Coalition Demonstration, 1970-71
Museum of Modern Art, New York
Photo: Jan Van Raay

Page 29 Phyllis-Penelope-Artemy Arte Sella, 1987 Borgo Valdagno, Italy

Page 31 Chicken Destruction with Jules Ablikim, New York, 1966
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Page 34 Chair Destruction, 1965 Truro Beach, Cape Cod, MA
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Page 35 Archaeological Find, 1964 Chrysler Museum
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Page 37 Destruction Theater, 1969 Ace Gallery, Los Angeles
Photo: Irvin Glaser
Courtesy of Ace Gallery

Pages 40-41 Archaeological Find #21, 1961
Destruction Spring sofa, wool, cotton, wire, vegetable fiber and glue on wooden backing
84" x 54" x 34"
Collection of the artist

Page 43 Destruction Theater, 1969 Ace Gallery, Los Angeles
Photo: Irvin Glaser
Courtesy of Ace Gallery

Hence, Leah Lauffer

Page 47 Computer-Laser Video Bridge Game, 11 mins., 45 sec., 1985

Page 49 Computer-Laser Video Pushann Pushann, 1984

Page 51 The Death of White Henry and Black Penny, 1968 DIAS
Judson Memorial Church, New York

Page 53 Computer-Laser Video What is This? (opera), 10 min., 1985
Photo: Leah Lauffer

Page 57 Chair Destruction, 1965 Truro Beach, Cape Cod, MA
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Page 61 Archaeological Find, 1962
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Page 62 Artist Worker’s Coalition Demonstration, 1970-71
Museum of Modern Art, New York
Photo: Jan Van Raay
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles

Inside back cover
Participants in the Destruction in Art Symposium, London, 1966
Top row, left to right: Susan Cahn, John Sexton, Rafael M. Ortiz, Kurt Kren, Ener Donagh, Peter Weibel, Bryant Patterson.
Front row left to right: Henri Chopin, Jean Toche, Gustav Metzger, Herman Reisch (holding poster), Juan Hidalgo (kneeling).
Photo: John Prosser
From the Archive of Kristine Stiles