



ARCHIVAL ASSEMBLAGES

RUTGERS AND THE AVANT-GARDE

an exhibition

1953-1964

SEPTEMBER 12-DECEMBER 14, 2001

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES GALLERY AT ALEXANDER LIBRARY

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an exhibition

Erika B. Gorder, Curator

September 12-December 14, 2001
Special Collections and University Archives Gallery
Rutgers University Libraries



mgsa

IN MEMORY OF
GEORGE SEGAL

1924-2000

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Erika Gorder
September 2001

CURATOR'S NOTE

Archival Assemblages: Rutgers University and the Avant-Garde, 1953-1964 showcases Special Collections and University Archives' rich documentation of the histories of both the University and New Jersey pertaining to this special group of artists working at Rutgers and in its environs. Rather than a presentation of the art objects themselves, the exhibition is a series of assemblages of photographs, correspondence, and ephemera which capture moments in time and pieces of history. Admittedly, it is not an exhaustive work in itself—but draws the contours of this “community of artists” in a specific place and time based on the extant documentation available in the University Archives, primarily, and also in Special Collections. The exhibition also consists of several items loaned from other sources: Geoffrey Hendricks, Robert Watts Studio Archives, Joan Marter, the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, and the Art Library (RUL).

This exhibition, as an introduction to the documentation available in Special Collections and University Archives, is the “tip of the iceberg” with respect to the history of the arts at Rutgers and the experiences of its participants. While I have attempted to be as inclusive as possible, there are undoubtedly gaps in the representation. Not all faculty have been represented, nor have all the talented art students from Douglass and Rutgers. Indeed any oversights are due partially to time and space constraints, as well as the seemingly unpredictable nature of the historic record as it survives (or does not) in the intellectual archeology that is an archives.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a group of artists at Rutgers University came together and presented radical new ideas and experiments that pushed beyond the limits of Abstract Expressionism. Collectively, the Rutgers group paved the way for a new direction in art that would have a lasting impact: performance art, installation art, pop art, and Fluxus. Between 1953 and 1964, Rutgers and its environs was the location for events like Allan Kaprow's first Happenings, Robert Watts and George Brecht's proto-Fluxus activities, Roy Lichtenstein's first pop paintings, and George Segal's sculptural situations. All the artists attempted to make art that extended beyond the traditional canvas and broke the barriers between art and life by incorporating real objects, space and time, people, audio-visual technology, and sensory stimuli to create communication with the audience. The artists—Allan Kaprow, Robert Watts, Geoffrey Hendricks, George Segal, Robert Whitman, Lucas Samaras, and George Brecht—were an informal group of friends and colleagues who emerged from New Brunswick and the central New Jersey landscape.

The Rutgers group was made up of both students and instructors. Kaprow, Watts, Hendricks, and Lichtenstein were on the faculty and Samaras and Whitman were students. The art faculty members acknowledged the strong influence of the famous Black Mountain College as their model for art education: one that was interdisciplinary, encouraged innovation in the studio, and offered freedom for students to explore their vision. Indeed, art historian Joan Marter notes that, Rutgers, in the Black Mountain tradition, became one of the most experimental art programs in the country.¹

THE UNIVERSITY: 1945-1965

Between 1945 and 1965, Rutgers University underwent some of the most monumental changes in its history.² Its transformation reflected changes in the political, social, economic, and cultural climate in higher education and the country as a whole. In 1945 Rutgers achieved legal recognition as the State University of New Jersey, and in 1946 merged with the University of Newark, acquiring a new campus and added responsibilities. Internally, the University revised its philosophy and objectives, which led to new educational policies and the reformation of personnel procedures. Concerned with a trend towards

¹ From *Off Limits: Rutgers University and the Avant-Garde, 1957-1963*. Joan Marter, ed. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999)

² The information for this essay on the general history of Rutgers University has been gathered from Richard McCormick, *Rutgers: A Bicentennial History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1966)

professional and vocational curricula, the University Council's Committee on Educational Policy endorsed a liberal education in 1945. All students would be exposed to the major disciplines and were required to complete full year courses in all those areas—the humanities, social sciences, and mathematics & science. The College of Arts and Sciences adopted these “general education” requirements and similar adjustments were discussed at Douglass College as well. The immediate result was a marked increase in enrollments in humanities courses and experimentation with area studies like American Civilization.

The University also turned its eye toward the faculty and the relationship between teaching and research. It recognized scholarship as crucial to the development of the faculty. The University set policies to provide facilities and support for research. The philosophy that a professor should be both a teacher and scholar prevailed. As the University assumed its new role as the State University, it planned for physical expansion and each college prepared for the “New Era.”

Post-war Rutgers experienced some significant “generation gaps” in both its student body and faculty. Returning veterans created an explosion on campus that resulted in a dynamic, if overcrowded, “Era of the GI.” The challenges were met with a vastly expanded faculty. Because so few new appointments happened between 1930 and 1945, there was a distinct “generation gap” on the faculty—between older, seasoned faculty members and a new infusion of young faculty with new ideas and approaches to education. In the student body—for the men's colleges—the influx of veterans meant a renewal of student activities that had all but dried up during the war. Participation in clubs like the Glee Club, *Targum*, *Anthologist*, and fraternities grew. New groups were also founded such as the Georgian Society (later Gamma Sigma fraternity), the Student Co-Op, and the radio station WRSU (1949). Reflecting the interests of this new influx of students, there was also phenomenal growth in engineering and, most importantly, the humanities, including art, music and philosophy.

More funding for research became available through the University Research Fund. Increases tended to affect the biological sciences, ceramics, physics, and social sciences as half of the funds came from contracts with Federal military agencies, but the humanities also reaped some of the benefits. In addition to the availability of research funding and undergraduate growth, graduate studies also underwent major changes and expansion. Before 1940, the strongest graduate programs were at the College of Agriculture and the scientific departments. These programs continued to attract the majority of graduate students. However by 1950 there were forty new graduate fields across disciplines. In 1949, the Office of the Provost was established. Mason Gross, who had been on the faculty of the Philosophy department

since 1946, was appointed to the new post responsible for the general administration of the University.

The first half of the 1950s at Rutgers was marred by financial woes and declining enrollment. Two bond issues to allocate state funds to the University had been defeated. However, in spite of serious financial difficulty, Rutgers managed to obtain funding for a new library and dormitories on College Avenue, all of which were completed in 1956. The library had a positive effect on the faculty, who hoped that they could continue to build up the graduate school with this new resource. The River Dorms and "Ledge" (which served as a student center) re-established a cohesive residential character of the men's colleges.

By the late 1950s controversy resurfaced surrounding liberal education, the curriculum, and the College of Arts and Sciences' mission. Some members of the faculty contended that the unity of a liberal arts college was threatened by a growing compartmentalization of departments. But the trend towards specialization continued as faculty members gravitated towards independent research and graduate teaching. Facing an anticipated influx of students in the mid-1950s, the faculty sought to simplify the curriculum by reducing the proliferation of courses and exploring new teaching methods such as the use of television and large lecture classes. During the 1950s, Douglass College retained its autonomy and special concern for the intellectual and social development of its students. It too was experiencing a period of vitality under the new Dean, Mary Bunting, who supported innovation and experimentation in the classroom. Douglass and Rutgers would be drawn into closer orbit by the increasing participation of their respective faculties in the Graduate School. By 1960 Rutgers University recognized the importance of graduate study (nearly one half of NJ's college graduates planned to engage in graduate or professional study) and adopted a policy on the obligations of Rutgers to research and graduate study.

The student body of the late 1950s and early 1960s was called, by Professor Richard McCormick, "cool" and "apathetic." There was a decline in interest in sports and student elections. In 1957 Rutgers had a "danceless prom." In 1959, CBS television network produced a study of college students, *Generation Without a Cause*, using Rutgers and Douglass students as its case study. It portrayed students as conservative conformists "playing it safe."³ Indeed, the University was not unaffected by the McCarthy era attacks on academic freedom on campus, which may have contributed to the quiescence of both the faculty and students in the late 1950s. However, there were signs of a dynamic underground culture on

³ Richard P. McCormick, *Rutgers: A Bicentennial History* (1966), p. 303

campus made up, not surprisingly, of art and literature students and faculty. One such student was Lucas Samaras. He and others lived in a boarding house at 82 Somerset Street. According to an account of Douglass College student, Barbara Long, who was part of the group, "It was next to a convent. The nuns later bought it [the house] and destroyed it because it was immoral . . . it was a refuge for bright, outcast students."⁴

In February 1959, Mason Gross assumed the Office of the President, the same year that a state bond issue for Rutgers finally passed. Rutgers University again would see unprecedented physical, curricular, and enrollment expansion from 1960 to 1964. In that period, new buildings were erected on all campuses, full-time undergraduate enrollment doubled, and the number of graduate and professional students rose from 2,736 to 5,586. Within the Graduate School, the most impressive progress was in non-scientific fields: history, English, economics, modern languages, and art.

THE ART DEPARTMENTS AT RUTGERS

If the Douglass and Rutgers art faculty cited the Black Mountain College as an influence on their educational philosophy, they were forming their own unique program in the context of Rutgers University. The University environment subtly enhanced, and at times impeded, their innovations in experimenting with the everyday and the inter-connectivity between art and technology. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Rutgers was divided by two separate campuses with separate faculties. At one end of New Brunswick was the men's college, the College of Arts and Sciences (Rutgers); at the other was Douglass College, an all-women's division. The Rutgers College Art Department focused primarily on art history but offered a few studio courses. Douglass, on the other hand, had a larger, fully developed studio program with extensive offerings in art history. Although both were single-sex colleges, students could "cross over" and take courses at the other campus. Beginning in the late 1950s, there was a move to coordinate the curriculum, eliminate duplication of course offerings, and consistently cross-list courses in each college's catalog. To assist with this process, "sections" were established for individual disciplines—art, economics, English, history, etc. The art section consisted of faculty from Rutgers College, Douglass College, and the College of Arts and Sciences in Newark.

⁴ Long is quoted in: Kim Levin, *Lucas Samaras* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1975), p. 17

A driving force behind the conceptualization of a “new” and “total” art was Allan Kaprow. He taught both art history and studio courses at Rutgers College. Kaprow came to the University during a period of incredible growth and popularity of the humanities at Rutgers College. As a trained art historian and artist, he was hired by Chair Helmut Von Erffa (who had studied at the Bauhaus in the 1920s) to bridge the gap between these two aspects of art pedagogy, a goal that seemed to fall easily within the College of Arts and Sciences’ reiteration of the importance of interdisciplinary liberal education. But Kaprow was particularly interested in exposing his art history students to the act of painting itself by demonstrating how art is made and why artists choose particular colors, shapes, and materials. The faculty at Douglass, represented by Geoffrey Hendricks, Robert Watts, and Chair, Theodore Brenson, also supported the integration of art history and studio work as well as placing an emphasis on the broad experience of its students in diverse fields, including the humanities and sciences.

A profound characteristic of art education at Rutgers was the expansion of the definitions and concepts of art, specifically the merger of art and technology. Kaprow’s theories of moving beyond the canvas and exploring the everyday was an example of this new approach. Robert Watts, as an engineer and artist, was fascinated by the possibilities of audio-visual technologies and its incorporation in the curriculum. Douglass College offered an Experimental Course in Art for 1957-1958 which stressed the importance of music, theater, literature and science in art instruction. In a similar vein, the *Project in Multiple Dimensions*, written by Kaprow, Watts, and George Brecht during 1957-1958 stated that the new art was intimately associated with science because of their mutual basis in inquiry, investigation, experimentation, and discovery.

In 1960, an MFA program in art was instituted. Part of the Graduate School, the Douglass College faculty was primarily responsible for its administration and instruction. By this time it was evident that major shifts were taking place in the art departments and that Rutgers College, in particular, was not committed to the studio art courses, taught by Allan Kaprow and Sam Weiner, for a variety of reasons. In deference to the mature studio program at Douglass, the Rutgers Art Department concentrated on art history while Douglass continued to develop the studio program. The MFA heralded a new era in art education at the University.

Kaprow’s and Watts’ ideas played out in the contested arena of educational philosophy and direction at Rutgers. They fit well within the interdisciplinary nature of a liberal education. On the other hand, stratification and diversification of the previously inclusive “Art Departments” into studio versus art

art history symbolized the growing trend towards specialization within the University at large. The establishment of the MFA program in 1960 was representative of the association of graduate study with serious experimentation in the arts. Rutgers was then poised to explore and develop a complete, streamlined arts program. Although it would be some time before all of the creative and performing arts would be housed under one roof, the Art Section, as early as Spring 1958, boldly called for the establishment of a School of the Arts.

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTS

Provocative innovations in art making and education by the Rutgers group took place in a “new” university setting, but they also happened amidst a modern urban landscape. Allan Kaprow commented on the importance of Central New Jersey in his essay, *Ten From Rutgers*:

New Jersey was once called the “Garden State”; but now much of it is a waste of filled-in marshes, constantly smoking dumps, treeless flats crusted over with housing projects, and vast industry whose gasses swirl permanently around the ankles. At the heart of this, located in a ghost town on a river bank, is Rutgers University. Like the State which has no flowers, Rutgers, on the surface, was barren in the 1950s. The numbness was pervasive. Yet a few of us found ourselves there for one reason or another . . . something had to happen there . . . Desolation revealed, and stood for, the authentic . . . But this judgement was typical of the mental life of a whole generation which was making art of such scenery. . . But the difference for us was that if we were also active in the New York studio and gallery world, we lived just far enough away from the loft parties and bars and from each other as well, to develop independently.⁵

What Kaprow left out, however, and Roy Lichtenstein later observed, was that Central New Jersey was also an amalgam of billboards and advertisements, multitudes of automobiles, and numerous roadside attractions. Certainly the area, and its roads leading to New York, were industrial. But central New Jersey in the 1950s was a diverse combination of landscapes.

Downtown New Brunswick was packed with department stores, luncheonettes, bars, restaurants,

⁵ Allan Kaprow, introductory essay for “Ten From Rutgers University, (New York: Bianchini Gallery, 1965) quoted in Joan Marter, editor, *Off Limits: Rutgers and the Avant-Garde, 1957-1963*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), p.2

delicatessens, movie theaters, thrift stores, automobile garages, and even an art gallery. In contrast, the Cook and Douglass campuses were picturesque, verdant sites. Across the river, Highland Park (the neighborhood with a small-town feel) was filled with sweet shops, "Sally's Celebrity Room," a Greek Orthodox Church, a synagogue, and community centers that hosted art exhibitions. Down the road from New Brunswick was South Brunswick, home to George Segal and his chicken farm (he joyfully relinquished farming in 1958). And, most importantly, New Brunswick had a train station with immediate access to New York City, the art capital of the United States, if not the world.

The diversity of New Jersey at the time as well as its proximity to New York, may have given New Brunswick some advantages. It afforded the artists a freedom to explore and develop individual styles unhindered by what Segal would later refer to as the "Art Ghetto" of New York. Kaprow and Segal, for example, exhibited their work at the Z & Z Deli. The group—faculty and students alike-- also had opportunities to gain experience (however informal) at the Studio Gallery on Albany Street, in the various galleries and spaces on campus, or in the shack on Douglass Campus where Watts and Kaprow did an environment with lights, sound, and objects.

Certainly, showing in New York galleries was their desired goal, as it represented serious achievement amongst one's peers in the art world. New York, too, was a crucial educational experience for the students. All of the artists in the Rutgers group had intimate ties to New York as close as the ones to New Jersey. But, as a unique environment, New Jersey must have affected these artists from the expansiveness of space and possibilities for large-scale experimentation on Segal's farm, to the raw materials to be scavenged, bought, or borrowed in the shops and junkyards. The diversity of landscape—the lights of the runways at Newark Airport, or the tires at the dump, or the Howard Johnson's, was part of the everyday experience which so inspired them.

CENTER OF GALLERY

Lucas Samaras, *Untitled*, ca. 1958

Painted masonite screen with aluminum leaf.

175 x 174 cm.

Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey.

Gift of the artist, 1347.

CASE 1

Posters: Exhibition Announcements for *Group 1* (1957), *Group 2* (1958), and *Group 3* (1959) shows at the Douglass College Art Gallery.

This series of three annual art exhibitions at the Douglass College Art Gallery were organized by members of the Douglass art faculty Geoffrey Hendricks and Robert Watts. They represent a commitment on the part of Hendricks, who oversaw the administration of the Gallery, to the serious development of the exhibitions program. They exhibitions are also emblematic of the faculty's desire to feature new art on campus.

Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks

CASE 2: ALLAN KAPROW

One of the most influential artists and philosophers of the new art movement of the late fifties and early sixties was Allan Kaprow. Hired by the Rutgers College art department in 1953, Kaprow was a dynamic figure on the faculty and later, in the art world. At Rutgers, he taught both art history and studio courses where he explored innovative pedagogical methods by integrating the act of painting into art history courses, and was the faculty advisor to the Rutgers College literary journal, the *Anthologist*. He was involved in other educational activities including lecturing in other departments of the University. He gave an Engineering Department Lecture "The Role of Chance in Creation," a Psychology Department lecture "Insanity in Art," and headed an art appreciation study group at the College of Agriculture. He also participated in local cultural events hosted by art and literary clubs.

Born in Atlantic City, New Jersey and raised in Arizona, Allan Kaprow earned his BA in philosophy from New York University (1949) and his MA in art history from Columbia (1951) studying under Meyer Schapiro. His groundbreaking work progressed from Abstract Expressionist painting to "Action Collages," and Environments. Most importantly, he was the father of "Happenings"—a blending of performance and installations of timed sounds, smells, events, electric lights and visual effects—which were representative of Kaprow's vision of incorporating the whole of everyday experience into art. Kaprow, too, was a writer and art critic/theorist. In 1956, he wrote what many scholars believe to be the seminal essay on Jackson Pollack, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollack," which was published in *Art News* in 1958. In this manifesto, and his subsequent writing, he assessed the impact of Pollack and the Abstract Expressionists and charted a new direction for a "New Art" that pushed beyond the traditional boundaries of the canvas.

Although the Rutgers group of the late 1950s and early 1960s was composed of individual artists with distinctive styles and visions, it was a flourishing community with a common creative spirit. It is quite possible that at its metaphorical center was Kaprow, who has been acknowledged as a major influence in the lives and work of the artists within it, particularly Lichtenstein, Segal, Whitman, and Samaras.

CASE 2

1. **Photograph:** Allan Kaprow as artist in his home studio in Lake Farrington, 1955.
2. **Broadside:** *Announcement for Kaprow's 18 Happenings in 6 Parts at the Reuben Gallery (New York City), October 1959.*
Kaprow described this show as the "Performance of a work: collage, construction, tape recorded sound, live sound, electric lights, performers, actors, dancers, mechanical toy, recorded music, and painters."
Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.
3. **Broadside:** *Cast of Participants for 18 Happenings in 6 Parts, 1959.*
List includes roles for Lucas Samaras and Robert Whitman. Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.
4. **Photograph:** *Grandma's Boy, 1957* (With reflection of artist.)
Reproduced from the *Anthologist* (1959 v. 30, n. 4). The assemblage consists of mattress ticking, broken furniture, mirror and found snapshot.
5. **Broadside:** *Apple Shrine environment at the Judson Gallery in New York City, 1960.*
6. **Broadside:** *Spring Happening at the Reuben Gallery in New York City, March 1961.*
Rutgers students Letty Eisenhauer and Steve Vasey were participants. Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.
7. **Broadside and Brochure:** *Kaprow's "Environment" at the Hansa Gallery, February 1958.*
Kaprow's first environment featured a maze of electric lights, suspended strips of cellophane and fabric and mirrors. Brochure includes an essay, "Notes on the Creation of a Total Art."
8. **Photograph:** Allan Kaprow as art scholar in his Rutgers College office, 1955.
9. **Photograph:** Allan Kaprow with Provost Mason Gross and other administrators during *Midwinter Alumni Day, 1958.* Kaprow presented a lecture, "New Developments in Contemporary Art" at this event.
10. **Letter:** Allan Kaprow to Provost Mason Gross, April 25, 1955.
Kaprow describes incorporating the act of painting in his art history courses.
11. **Manuscript Letter to President Mason Gross, May 28, 1959.**
Describes the transformation of his art.
12. **First page of script "Something to take place: a happening," 1959.**
Reproduced from the *Anthologist* (1959 v. 30, n. 4)
13. *Off Limits: Rutgers University and the Avant-Garde 1957-1963.* Joan Marter, ed. (1999).

CASE 3: ROBERT WATTS

Born in Burlington, Iowa, Robert Watts received his BA in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Louisville. During the Second World War he was an engineer on aircraft carriers in the United States Navy. In 1946 he moved to New York where he studied at the Art Students League and received his MA in Art History from Columbia University in 1951. Robert Watts joined the Rutgers faculty first in the School of Engineering in 1952. One year later he transferred to the Douglass Art Department. There he began the radical introduction of audio-visual technology into art practice. By 1958 he had abandoned painting and began working on constructions with kinetics, motors, electric lights, and sound. This new direction was marked by a proposal, written with George Brecht and Allan Kaprow in 1957-1958, *Project in Multiple Dimensions* (see Case #7). In 1960, Watts prepared a score for *Magic Kazoo*, a lengthy multi-location event which included the Jersey Shore. Later, he would also experiment with stamp art and other proto-Fluxus events such as the 1963 Yarn Festival planned with George Brecht.

At Douglass College, Watts was a dedicated and influential instructor as well as an innovative artist. He created events and exhibitions in collaboration with Geoffrey Hendricks, Allan Kaprow, and George Brecht. In the spring of 1958 he served on the Voorhees Assembly Board which arranged a series of chapel events for the students centering on the theme of "Communication." The program consisted of a poetry reading by John Ciardi (English Dept. RC), a lecture and performance by John Cage and David Tudor, a dance performance by Paul Taylor, and Allan Kaprow's first Happening. Watts' interest in the expansion of artistic landscape centered in the merging of art and technology. He was also interested in technology as a component of teaching. In addition to the more formal *Project in Multiple Dimensions*, Watts was intuitively aware of trends in American culture, communications, and higher education—he proposed several experimental workshops to Dean Mary Bunting regarding the development of Audio-Visual technology and its instructional uses.

CASE 3

1. **Photograph: Robert Watts with sculpture at the Douglass Art Gallery, 1958.**
2. **Broadside: Announcement of Grand Central Moderns solo exhibition, December 19, 1960-January 7, 1961.** Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.
3. **Photographs: Watts working on a sculpture, 1960.**
4. **Two part letter to Dean Mary Bunting, April 25, 1957.**
Outlines Watts' ideas for two experimental courses, one a workshop in audio-visual teaching techniques.
5. **Letter from Dean Mary Bunting, May 28, 1957.**
6. **Hot Sculpture, 1960**
Heated nichrome wire, mirrors, metal, plaster. Courtesy: Robert Watts Studio Archives, NYC. Larry Miller and Sara Seagull.
7. **Pony Express, 1960.**
Motorized kinetic construction electric lights, metals, glass, ink on paper (pages from a Pony Express Account Book), mixed objects, wood crate. (Collection: Moderna Museet, Stockholm) Courtesy: Robert Watts Studio Archives, NYC.
8. **Star Chief, 1962**
Dashboard with ornaments, working radio, and speedometer altered by the artist. The green dashboard, when plugged into an electrical outlet, made noises while the odometer clicked off the miles at a rate indicating it was doing 300 mph. Courtesy: Robert Watts Studio Archives, NYC. Larry Miller and Sara Seagull
9. **Photograph: Robert Watts with student and her work, 1963.**
This photo was used in 1963 "Arts and Hobbies" article in the *Sunday Home News*.
10. **Photograph: Robert Watts at an event sponsored by, Kappa Pi the Douglass Honorary Art Society.** Reproduced from the *Quair*, 1958.
11. **Frog Game, 1960** Kinetic construction/game with lights.
Courtesy: Robert Watts Studio Archives, NYC. Larry Miller and Sara Seagull.
12. **Photograph: Approach lights leading to Newark Airport's runway, ca. 1950s.**
The lighting system consists of 14 foot wide horizontal bars of light, below which is a light that flashes in sequence toward the runway so that the pilot sees a "moving light" down the strip. Robert Watts was so intrigued by this lighting system that he incorporated the idea in his own work as well as lighting elements for Allan Kaprow's environments. Courtesy: Newark Public Library.
13. **Photograph: Watts with student in the Douglass Art Department studios, 1961.**

CASE 4: LUCAS SAMARAS

Lucas Samaras, Kaprow's exceptional student, was born in Macedonia and came to West New York, New Jersey in 1947. An artist known for his series of experimentations with polaroid photographs ("Transformations") in the 1970s, Lucas Samaras's work combines the use of unconventional, often dangerous, materials--straight pins, razor blades, knives, scissors, as well as tissue paper, taxidermy/animals, yarn, hair, hardware, feathers, fabric, aluminum foil, cellophane, etc.--to form constructions such as paintings, books, boxes, chairs, etc. Samaras' work is confrontational and autobiographical with elements of the "fantastic." In 1955, Samaras won a scholarship to Rutgers on the basis of watercolors and pencil drawings depicting the Crucifixion. He took art classes with Kaprow, attended sessions of the Sketch Club (taught by George Segal) and studied literature and theater. He was a member of the Rifle Team, the Queens Theater (an intercollege student stage company), and was art director for the literary journal the *Anthologist*. He was also a member of the progressive Gamma Sigma fraternity.

At Rutgers, Samaras was constantly in motion. In addition to serving as art editor for the *Anthologist*, he participated in at least two plays during 1958-59, one of which featured him playing dual roles. 1958 was a stellar year for Samaras, who had two solo exhibitions at the Jewish Community Center in Highland Park, a solo exhibition at the Art House, and established the Rutgers Co-op Gallery at 82 Somerset Street (part of the Rutgers Student Co-Op). In 1958-59 Samaras worked on his Henry Rutgers Thesis which, under the supervision of Allan Kaprow, was a combination of written text, photographs, and art works. Some of the writings and poems contained "objectionable" words such as "fuck" and "piss." When Samaras presented his thesis at the perfunctory Henry Rutgers Scholars seminar at the Dean's Office, some administrators and faculty took offense, citing inappropriate use of university monies to fund the project. Allan Kaprow, his advisor, lobbied for Samaras, whose thesis did pass. He graduated in 1959. The incident, unfortunately, would play a major role in the denial of tenure to Kaprow in 1961.

After Samaras' graduation, he continued to remain close to the Rutgers group, particularly to Bob Whitman, Kaprow and Segal. A natural actor, he participated in many early happenings of Kaprow, Whitman, and Claes Oldenburg. He also was a model for some of George Segal's sculptures including the *Dinner Table* (1961) and later *Abraham and Isaac*, 1978 (located on the campus of Princeton University).

CASE 4

1. **Photograph: Freshman Lucas Samaras with Helmut Von Erffa, chair of the Rutgers College Art Department, showing the drawing that earned him a four year scholarship, 1955.**
2. ***Sunday New York Times*, October 4, 1964 featuring Lucas Samaras installation at the Green Gallery (NYC).**
The environment recreates the artist's room in West New York, New Jersey and includes furniture, personal memorabilia, and art works made during his years at Rutgers.
3. **Self-Portrait, ca. 1958.** Reproduced from the *Anthologist*, (1959 v. 30, n. 4.)
4. ***New York Times Magazine* article: December 8, 1964. Features Samaras' Box #3 (1962).**
5. **Memorandum : Cornelius Boocock, October 21, 1958.**
Boocock candidly describes Samaras. Recipient unknown, possibly Provost Mason Gross.
6. **Letter: Mason Gross to Morrison Steel Company, May 15, 1958.**
Mason Gross thanked a supply company for providing materials to Samaras which may have been used to create the panels, *Untitled, 1958* featured in this exhibition.
7. **Letter: Lucas Samaras to Mason Gross, December 12, 1958.**
Mason Gross had not yet officially become President of the University (February 1959) but this letter demonstrates both the interest Gross had in the arts and his collegiality and interest in students.
8. **Queens Theater Program 1958-1959 season.**
Two performances featured Samaras—"Ring Round the Moon" and "Liliom."
9. **Scarlet Letter, 1959.**
Photograph of Queens Theater Guild including Samaras (sitting in center) in his dual role in "Ring Round the Moon."
10. **Senior Portrait, 1959.** Reproduced from the *Scarlet Letter*, 1959.
11. **Book, 1968.**
12. **Rifle Team, Scarlet Letter, 1958.**
13. **Degrees and Honors Conferred, 1959.**
Samaras in list of Henry Rutgers Scholars.
14. **Jewish Community Center of New Brunswick card, ca. 1955.**
Samaras had two solo exhibitions at the Jewish Community Center of Highland Park.

CASE 5: ROY LICHTENSTEIN

Roy Lichtenstein, whose name is synonymous with Pop Art, was a member of the Douglass College Art Department faculty from 1960 until 1963, when he left to pursue painting full-time. Shortly thereafter he achieved phenomenal, world-wide success at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York. Roy Lichtenstein was born and raised in New York City, and attended classes at Parsons School of Design and the Art Students League. He enrolled at Ohio State University in 1940 but one year before his graduation was drafted into the army and trained as a pilot serving in France and England. After the war, Lichtenstein finished his Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree at Ohio State. Before starting his first teaching position in 1957 at the State University of New York in Oswego, Lichtenstein was a practicing commercial artist and designer in Cleveland, Ohio.

During the 1950s, Lichtenstein used American themes and combined a fascination with television and advertising media images with his interest in the fine arts creating paintings with a humorous reinterpretation. At Douglass, Lichtenstein developed friendships with Watts, Geoffrey Hendricks (who shared an office with him), George Segal, and Allan Kaprow. In his first year at Rutgers, he exhibited several abstract paintings at the Douglass Art Gallery at the same time he was experimenting with cartoon imagery (partly inspired by the bubble gum wrappers his children brought home). Kaprow who had been to his home studio in Highland Park one summer, was delighted with what he saw-- "Look Mickey," considered to be Lichtenstein's first cartoon painting. Roy Lichtenstein was encouraged by his colleagues, particularly Allan Kaprow whom he consciously acknowledged as an influence. Art, Kaprow insisted, did not always have to "look like art."

1. **Portrait, 1961.** Reproduced from the *Quair*, 1961.
2. **Poster: Lichtenstein retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum, 1993-1994.**
3. **Photograph: Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Watts, and unidentified woman in the Douglass Art Gallery Garden, ca. 1960-1961.**
4. **Exhibition Announcement: Exhibition of paintings at the Douglass College Art Gallery, 1961.**
Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.
5. **Photographs: Lichtenstein working in his Highland Park home studio at 66 Adelaide Street, 1963.**

CASE 6: GEOFFREY HENDRICKS

Geoffrey Hendricks, born in New Hampshire, has been an art faculty member at Rutgers through the program's many transformations from the mid-1950s to the present. A major Fluxus activist and internationally-acclaimed performance artist, he is perhaps best known for his cloud paintings and sky motifs. He came to Rutgers to teach at Douglass College after graduating from Amherst and studying at Smith College and Cooper Union. While teaching at Douglass, Hendricks studied art history at Columbia University and completed his thesis in 1960 on Baroque ceiling paintings. A painter in the 1950s, Hendrick's work had shifted by 1962 to found object constructions with wooden boxes, tires, book covers, flowers and birds. Like his studies of clouds, which were painted on everyday objects as well as on canvasses, much of Hendricks' painting and performances are naturalistic.

Hendricks is a respected and admired teacher and faculty member. His involvement in the University has been diverse. In the late 1950s he was faculty advisor to the Pen and Brush Club. He played a significant role in the development of the Art Department at Douglass, particularly through the planning of the MFA program at Rutgers—an endeavor that would lead to the establishment Mason Gross School of the Arts in the late 1970s. As director of the gallery program, Hendricks sought out artists with the "intention of featuring new art," resulting in a series of three exhibitions, *Group 1* (1957), *Group 2* (1958) and *Group 3* (1959) that featured work of Robert Rauchenburg, Jean Follett, Allan Kaprow, Robert Watts, and others (see Case #1). In 1969, he was a member of the Committee on the Education of Women, and in 1970 brought Fluxus to Rutgers by arranging the controversial *Fluxmass* at Voorhees Chapel.

CASE 6

1. Photograph: Pen and Brush Club at Douglass College, 1958.

Geoffrey Hendricks was faculty advisor for this club. Reproduced from the *Quair*, 1958

2. Photograph, 1958. Hendricks with painting at his solo exhibition at the Douglass Art Gallery in 1958.

3. Exhibition Announcement, 1958. Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.

4. Photograph: Artist with his work, *Picturesque America*, 1962. Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.

5. Exhibition Announcement, 1962. Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.

6. Photographs: *Spirit Level*, 1964. Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.

7. Photograph: *Blue Policeman*, 1963. (Collection: Palais Lichtenstein)
On mount with mss. notation by artist. Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.

8. Exhibition Catalog: *Geoffrey Hendricks: Day Into Night*, 1992-1993.

CASE 7: PROJECT IN MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS

George Brecht, Allan Kaprow, and Robert Watts wrote *Project in Multiple Dimensions* between 1957 and 1958. It was a grant proposal submitted to Rutgers for a series of events and lectures that did not, ultimately, receive funding from the University. The proposal metaphorically situated the artist and the scientist in the same field, one characterized by experimentation, discovery, and invention. In the proposal, the artists also recognized that scientists had a considerable advantage over artists in the form of funding and administrative support. They also developed the concept of "multidimensional media" – audio visual media such as electronically produced sound, light, and visuals—which could be used to produce "new aesthetic experiences."

Developments in science and technology, the authors reasoned, provided a myriad of new materials with which to create new forms of art. They sought Rutgers support because of its proximity to New York City and ". . . particularly because it had no traditions in art which could encumber any new ideas, is in a remarkable position to help the development of these ideas, and at the same time, become one of the most exciting places in the world of art." (p. 5) Although the *Project in Multiple Dimensions* did not receive University funding support, Kaprow and Watts collaborated on other experiments around campus and, of course, continued their individual explorations in audio-visual technologies and new forms of artistic expression.

CASE 7

1. *Project in Multiple Dimensions*. Written by George Brecht, Allan Kaprow, and Robert Watts. 1957-58

2 Pages; Cover page with mss. notation by Kaprow.

2. Photograph: Howard Johnson's Restaurant, New Brunswick, ca. 1960.

Bob Watts and George Brecht had weekly lunches here. Not only did they plan their 1963 Yam Festival over lunch, but the distinctive nature of the Howard Johnson's food service influenced Watt's work with food themes in the mid-1960s.

3. Photograph: George Brecht with work at Douglass College Art Gallery, 1958.

George Brecht was a chemist at Johnson & Johnson. Trained in mathematical theory, he explored the visual arts and the laws of chance. He was deeply interested in the work of John Cage and experimented with random sound, ambient noise, "time" events, and situations "depersonalizing the art making process." Brecht worked closely with both Robert Watts and Allan Kaprow collaborating on the *Project in Multiple Dimensions* and Yam Festival.

4. *The Electronic Sound Studio in an Art of Multiple Dimensions*, ca. 1959.

Allan Kaprow outlines audio-visual components of the *Project in Multiple Dimensions*. In this document he explains that "recent developments in electronic acoustical industry make sound practically a new field for the multidimensional artist" creating a "fresh and complex audible experience."

CASE 8: ROBERT WHITMAN

Robert Whitman's lasting contribution to the 1960s art scene was his performance pieces known for their dramatic imagery and structural continuity. He also left an indelible mark on the installation art genre by his use of film looping and projection—an example of which is *Shower*, a construction of a real shower with running water where a moving image of a naked woman bathing is projected into it. Whitman was born in New York City and attended private school in New Jersey before enrolling at Rutgers College in 1953 as an English major. He was influenced by Professor Francis Fergusson who taught a course on Dante (which led Whitman to study Italian). Fergusson was a playwright with an interest in the philosophy of theater developing separate from commerce.

Whitman's transition to the visual arts at Rutgers came in 1956 when he met Samaras and took a Modern Art course with Kaprow who supported his students' individuality and emphasized new approaches to art and media. His extra-curricular activities at Rutgers included the Art History Club, the American Studies Club, and the Sketch Club, taught by George Segal. Whitman lived in Highland Park for two years after his graduation in 1957 and maintained close ties with his community of artist friends. During that time he participated in Kaprow's Happenings, contributed to the *Anthologist*, had a solo exhibition at the Art House, and his first exhibition at the Hansa Gallery in 1959, which included constructions of hanging plastic, cellophane, aluminum foil, and colored lights. In the early 1960s he devoted himself performances which often included friend Lucas Samaras (*American Moon*, 1960).

CASE 8

1. Senior Portraits, 1957.
2. Photograph: **American Studies Club, 1956.** Reproduced from *Scarlet Letter*, 1956.
3. Photograph: **Sketch Club, 1957.** Reproduced from *Scarlet Letter*, 1957.
4. *Anthologist* (1958) cover by Robert Whitman.
5. Book: *Off Limits: Rutgers University and the Avant-Garde 1957-1963*. Edited by Joan Marter. (1999)
Images of Robert Whitman performances.
6. Book: *Figures/Environments: Alex Katz, Red Grooms, Jann Haworth, Duane Hanson, Paul Thek, Lynton Wells, George Segal, Robert Whitman*. (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis: 1970)
Courtesy: Art Library, RUL.

Wall:

- 7 & 8. Reproductions from *Anthologist* (1959, Art Issue, v. 30, n. 4)
Construction, 1957 a multimedia construction featured in solo exhibition at the Hansa Gallery, January 1959, and an untitled essay.

CASE 9 : GEORGE SEGAL

George Segal, best known for his sculptural tableaux placing plaster casts of people in everyday environments or situations, moved to New Jersey with his parents in 1940 when they relocated from the Bronx, to a chicken farm in South Brunswick. The Segal family joined a unique tradition of rural Jewish farmers in New Jersey. He attended an arts high school in New York and lived with relatives in Brooklyn. He attended Cooper Union while working on the farm in South Brunswick. In 1949 he graduated from New York University with a degree in art education and bought his own farm across the road from his parents. In 1953 he met his neighbor, new Rutgers College faculty member Allan Kaprow. While teaching art and English in local high schools he struggled with the chicken farm and worked on his art.

Kaprow and Segal became good friends. They debated art philosophies and the direction and contours of a new art as Segal participated in many events in and around Rutgers in the 1950s and 1960s. For instance, in 1956 Kaprow and Segal exhibited paintings at the Z & Z Kosher Delicatessen in New Brunswick. What may have jokingly been referred to as a "New Brunswick School" nevertheless had some validity. Segal began instructing the Rutgers College Sketch Club in 1955—a club attended by both Robert Whitman and Lucas Samaras as undergraduates. Their collective involvement, as well as with Robert Watts and Geoffrey Hendricks, nurtured intellectual and creative exchange. Segal, like many others, considered Kaprow a major influence on the development of his art. Similarly, many of Kaprow's Happenings and other performance events took place on his farm in South Brunswick between 1957 and 1964.

Segal was a member of the Hansa Gallery (NYC) and had his first show there in 1956. By 1959, he was already experimenting with plaster. His first attempt juxtaposed his sculptures, created by using strips of burlap dipped in plaster covering chicken wire, with his paintings. These "crude" studies were refined when, in 1961, a student of his whose husband was a chemist at Johnson & Johnson, introduced him to newly developed plaster-infused bandages produced by the local company. Encouraged by Kaprow, he continued to explore the possibilities of this new medium and included his friends and former students as his earliest subjects in "casting from life." For example, in the *Dinner Table* included in his MFA exhibition (1963), Segal cast his friends Kaprow, Samaras, Jill Johnston, Vaughan Kaprow, his wife, and himself in the first attempt to place the casts in a "compositional" grouping. In so doing he created an "environment" drawn directly from everyday experience capturing people in public and private moments.

CASE 9

1. Photograph: Portrait of George Segal, n.d.
2. Photograph: Segal painting in his studio on his farm in South Brunswick, N.J., 1960.
3. Home News, *Arts and Hobbies* section article, September 19, 1965.
4. Photograph: Sketch Club with Segal as Instructor, 1955.
Reproduced from *Scarlet Letter*, 1955.
5. Photograph: Segal in his farm studio with two early sculptures, 1960.
Includes sculpture for *The Legend of Lot*, 1958.
6. Photograph: Student viewing *Dinner Table* at Segal's MFA exhibition, 1963.
7. *Sculpture, Paintings, Pastels: A Discussion of My Recent Work*. Master of Fine Arts Thesis, 1963. Graduate School, Rutgers, the State University.
8. MFA Exhibition Card, 1963. Courtesy: Geoffrey Hendricks.

CASE 10: George Segal & the Local Scene

1. Broadsides: "Jersey Fresh Eggs," ca. 1950.
2. Photograph: George Segal and Allan Kaprow installing exhibition at Z & Z Kosher Delicatessen in New Brunswick, 1956.
3. Photograph: "Egg-O-Mat" in Hillsborough Township, N.J., 1955.
4. Photograph: Kiwanis club meets local N.J. farmers, 1956.
5. Photograph: Roosevelt Junior High (New Brunswick) student displaying her art work, 1959
George Segal taught at Roosevelt School while he was working on his MFA at Rutgers from 1961 to 1963.

CASE 11: DOUGLASS AND RUTGERS ART DEPARTMENTS

1. ***Sunday Home News*, "Arts & Hobbies" section, April 28, 1963. Featuring Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Watts.**
2. **Photograph: Art Building–Douglass Campus.**
3. **Photograph: Students in Douglass College art studio, ca. 1960.**
4. **Photograph: Douglass Art Department Professor Ka Kuong Hui with student, ca. 1960.**
5. **Document: Outline of an Experimental Course in Art 1957-1958**
Submitted by Douglass Art Department Chair Theodore Brenson.
6. **Voorhees Assembly Card, Spring 1958.**
The "Communication" section of the spring program was organized by Robert Watts with the assistance of Allan Kaprow. The programs featured poet John Ciardi (Rutgers College), avant-garde composer John Cage, and Allan Kaprow's first "Happening."
7. ***Quair*, 1957 featuring senior portrait of Letty Lou Eisenhower.**
Eisenhower was a Douglass College undergraduate and earned her MFA at Rutgers. As a student of Robert Watts and Geoffrey Hendricks, she frequently appeared in Kaprow's Happenings including *Spring Happening*.
8. **Photograph: Phi Kappa Alpha House, ca. 1950.**
This building later housed the Rutgers College Departments of Art & Philosophy.
9. **Photograph: Student viewing faculty exhibition at Rutgers College Art House, 1960.**
Although the artist is unidentified, this is probably a painting by Samuel Weiner.
10. **Document: List of paintings by Rutgers College faculty and students on exhibition at the 92nd St. Y (New York City), 1959.**
Includes Rutgers College Art Professor Samuel Weiner and student Robert Harding as well as Kaprow, Samaras, and Whitman.
11. **Photograph: Helmut Von Erffa with student, ca. 1955.**
Von Erffa was Chairman of the Rutgers College Department of Art while Kaprow was on the faculty, 1953-1961. He studied at the famous Bauhaus in the 1920s.
12. **Photograph: Gary Kuehn with constructions, 1964**
Possibly Kuehn's MFA exhibition. Kuehn is currently the Chair of the Department of Visual Arts, Mason Gross School of the Arts.
13. **Photograph: Two graduate students working on automobile, 1962.**
Under the auspices of the Graduate School, the MFA program was launched in 1960. Primarily, the Douglass College Department of Art faculty provided instruction and advising for this program.

CASE 12: RUTGERS UNIVERSITY AND ITS ENVIRONS

1. Pamphlet: *Years of Crisis*, 1957.

A student task force organized to address the issue of overcrowding, faculty shortage, and funding problems at the University published this pamphlet, which uses the Art House as an example of space problems. During the post-war period, several state bond issues proposed to alleviate the University's severe financial problems were defeated.

2. Photograph: River Dorms, 1956

Sorely needed on-campus housing for undergraduates, the construction of the river dorms and the "Ledge" represented the break in the state funding log-jam and ushered in a period of growth on all campuses of the University in the late 1950s and 1960s

3. Photograph: Students Protesting Segregation, ca. 1960.

The Ledge (built in 1956) provided a much needed space for student activity and social life. Both on College Avenue and across town at Douglass, students were becoming aware of social injustice. These early protests at the Ledge marked the beginnings of a radical consciousness amongst Rutgers students.

4. Photograph: Rutgers Engineering Department Television Display, 1957.

5. *Quair*, 1957.

Student life at Rutgers and Johnny Bunting playing Elvis Presley.

6. Photograph: George Street looking towards Albany Street, 1961.

A view of the urban landscape between Rutgers College and Douglass College.

7. Photograph: Allan Kaprow and George Segal at Z&Z Kosher Delicatessen on Hiram Street, 1956.

Kaprow envisioned this exhibition in the spirit of nineteenth-century artists who would exchange art work for food in local cafes.

8. Photograph: Stock Car Races at Old Bridge Stadium, 1958.

Allan Kaprow commented that American "Happenings" and culture were "free-wheeling, like hot-rod races."

9. Pamphlet: Highway Traffic Problem study, ca. 1955.

The age of the automobile during the 1950s in New Jersey. Then, as now, traffic congestion was a serious problem. During the 1950s, the U.S. saw a major changes in its infrastructure as a result of the automobile and suburbanization.

10. Photograph: Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge, 1961.

Local eatery for members of the Art Faculty and students on both campuses including Allan Kaprow, George Brecht, Robert Watts, and Letty Lou Eisenhauer.

11. Photograph: Atomic Reactor Laboratory in Plainsboro, 1958.

The atomic age in the New Jersey countryside.

12. Photograph: Dining Room at Sally's Bar & Restaurant, Highland Park, 1957.

The murals on the walls were painted by George Brecht and Bruce MacPhail, 1954.

13. The *Anthologist*, 1958-1959.

Covers of the student literary journal designed by Lucas Samaras , its art director from 1957 to 1959.