




VM503
AESTHETICS AND HISTORY
OF NEW MEDIA

WEEK 4 CLASS 2

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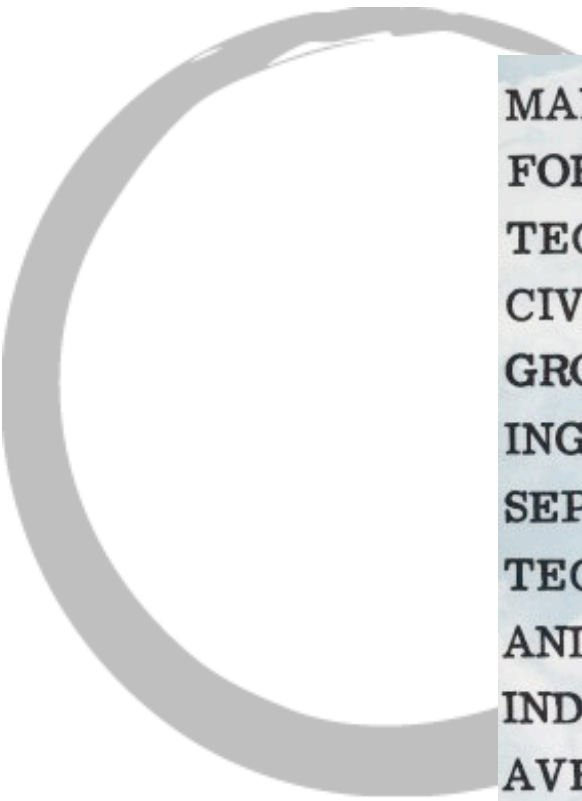


Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.)

- Founded in **1966** by *Billy Kluver, Fred Waldhauer, Robert Rauschenberg* and *Robert Whitman*.
- Was a non-profit group active primarily from 1960s - 80s.
- Its aim was to **mobilize the arts, industry and science** around projects that involved participants from each field.
- It promoted **interdisciplinary collaborations** through a program pairing **artists and engineers**.

E.A.T. continued ...

- Organized educational activities to acquaint the public with **telecommunication technologies** like **telewriting** and **satellite transmission**.
- Other projects emulating international aid programs were devised to *give developing countries access to community media*.
- In the mid-1970s, E.A.T. began opening chapters in the United States, Canada and Japan.



MAINTAIN A CONSTRUCTIVE CLIMATE FOR THE RECOGNITION OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS BY A CIVILIZED COLLABORATION BETWEEN GROUPS UNREALISTICALLY DEVELOPING IN ISOLATION. ELIMINATE THE SEPARATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL FROM TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND EXPAND AND ENRICH TECHNOLOGY TO GIVE THE INDIVIDUAL VARIETY, PLEASURE AND AVENUES FOR EXPLORATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY LIFE. ENCOURAGE INDUSTRIAL INITIATIVE IN GENERATING ORIGINAL FORETHOUGHT, INSTEAD OF A COMPROMISE IN AFTERMATH, AND PRECIPITATE A MUTUAL AGREEMENT IN ORDER TO AVOID THE WASTE OF A CULTURAL REVOLUTION.

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9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering (1965-1966)

- An **interdisciplinary** project blending **avant-garde theatre, dance and new technologies**.
- 30 engineers and scientists from Bell Laboratories collaborated with *John Cage, Lucinda Childs, Ovind Fahlstrom, Alex Hay, Deborah Hay, Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Rauschenberg, David Tudor and Robert Whitman*.
- Took place at the 69th Regiment **Armory** (New York) from **October 13 -23, 1966**.



Closed-circuit television and **television projection** was used on stage for the first time; a **fiber-optics camera** picked up objects in a performer's pocket; an **infrared television camera** captured action in total darkness; a **Doppler sonar device** translated movement into sound; and **portable wireless FM transmitters** and **amplifiers** transmitted speech and body sounds to Armory loudspeakers.

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Bandoneon, David Tudor

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Wired Tennis Racket designed by Bill Kaminsky for Robert Rauschenberg's "Open Score"

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Variations VII, John Cage, et al.

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Kisses Sweeter than Wine

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Physical Things

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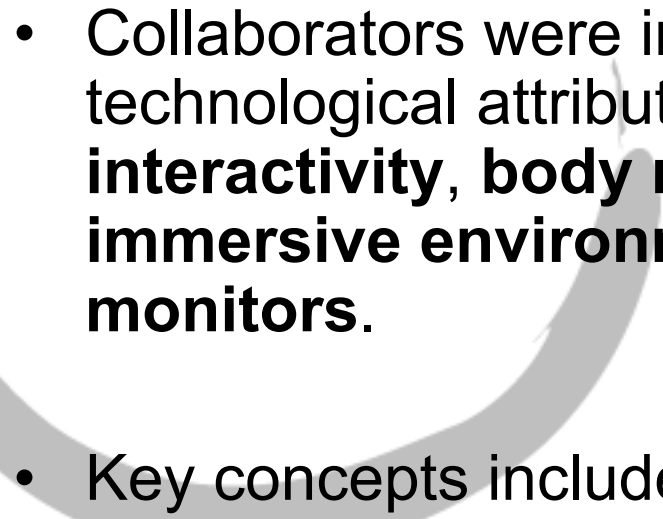

Robert Whitman, Two Holes of Water

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Alex Hay and Robert Rauschenberg

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- Collaborators were interested in four new technological attributes: **wireless connectivity, interactivity, body mapping**, and the creation of **immersive environments and atmospheres via TV monitors.**
 - Key concepts included **fluidity, spontaneity, liveliness, transparency, immersion and intimacy between artist and audience.**
 - Also an interest in the **ephemeral** and the **immaterial.**

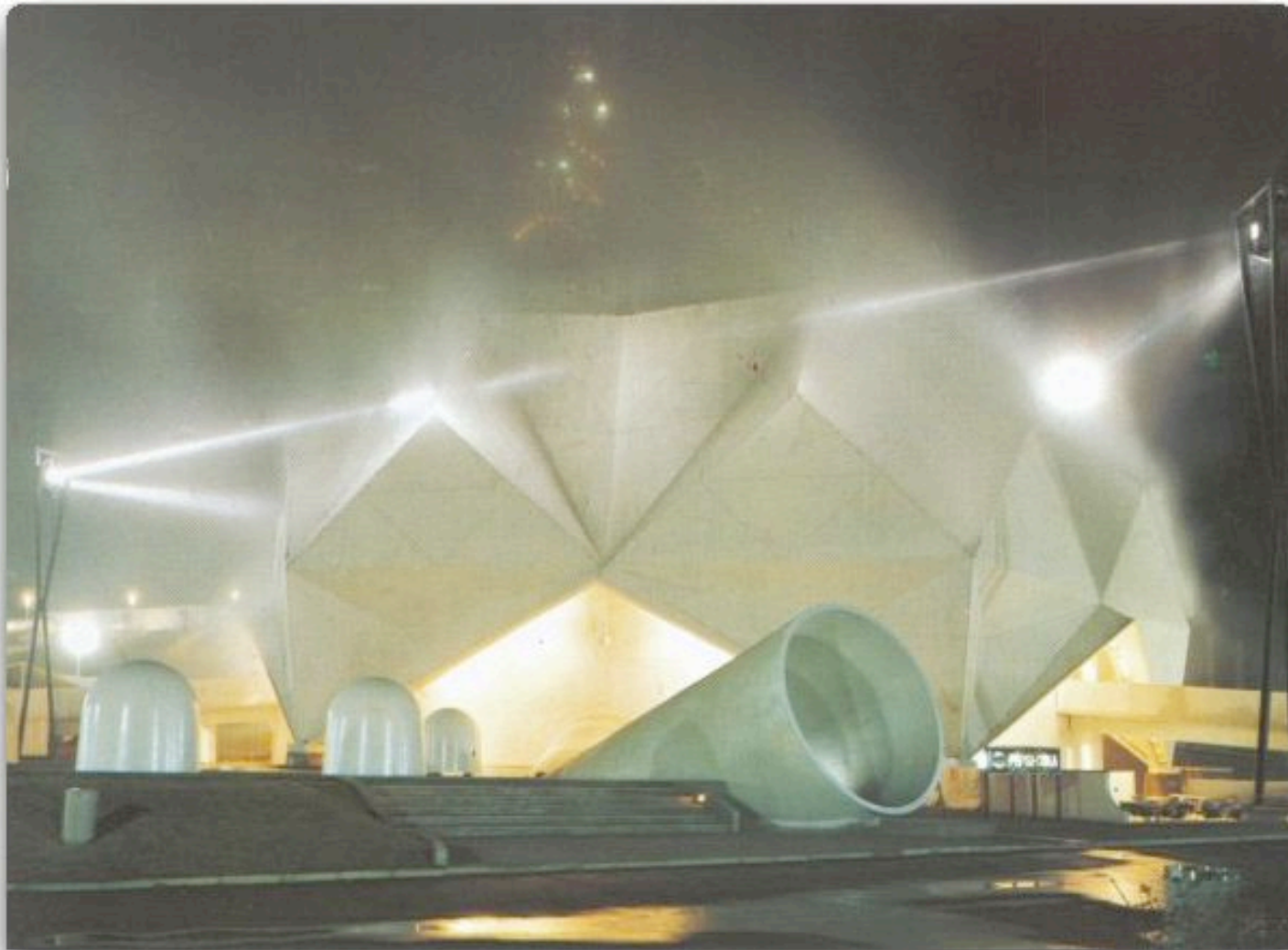
Alex Hay and Robby Robinson: Grass Field



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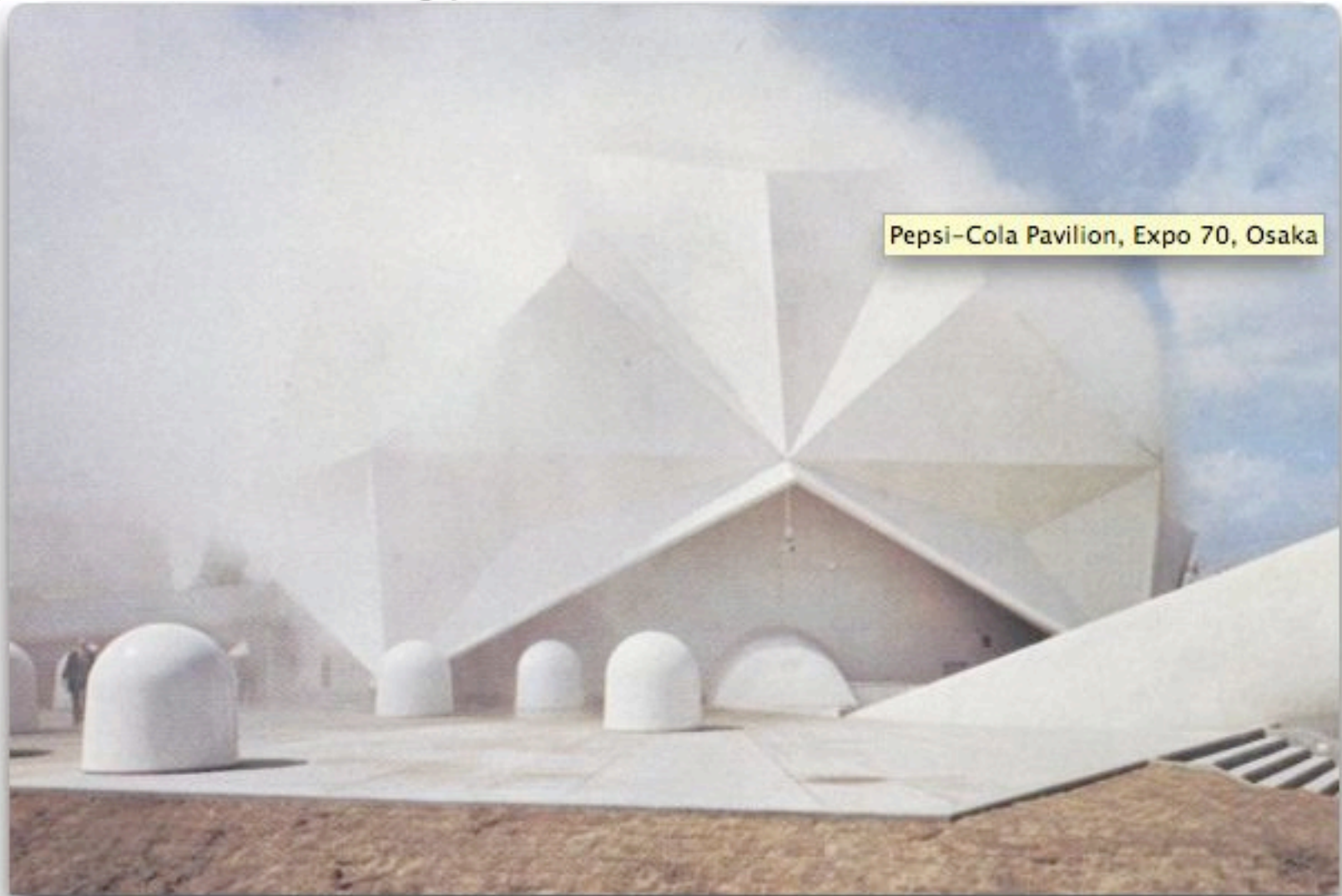


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The Pepsi Pavilion, Osaka, Japan, 1970

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Blur Building, Diller + Scofidio (2002)

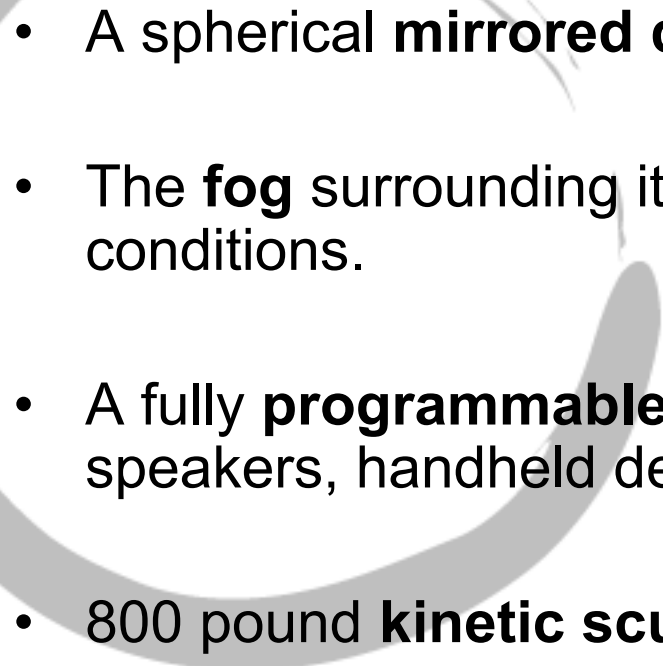



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- A monumental architectural installation **The Pepsi Pavilion** was a seminal work that grew out of the idealism and social turbulence of the artistic avant-garde of the 1960s.
- Over 75 artists and engineers created it for Expo 70, Osaka, Japan.
- “The initial concern of the artists who designed the Pavilion was that the quality of the experience of the visitor should involve **choice, responsibility, freedom, and participation**. The Pavilion would not tell a story or guide the visitor through a didactic, authoritarian experience. The visitor would be encouraged as an individual to **explore the environment and compose his own experience.**” - Billy Kluver

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- A spherical **mirrored dome**.
 - The **fog** surrounding it responded to meteorological conditions.
 - A fully **programmable surround-sound** system (37 speakers, handheld devices carried by visitors).
 - 800 pound **kinetic sculptures** reacted to physical touch.
 - **Four towers** with powerful **xenon lights** generating a **well-defined beam** between each tower, dramatically framing the dome at night.
 - **Live programming** and **rotating teams**.



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- Not an object, but a **multisensory experience** within an **immersive, responsive environment**.
- As an environment it represented a new form of **community**.
- Valued the **active participation of the audience**.
- It was symbolic of an **organism** constantly in a state of subtle **change** and **flux**.
- *“Through aesthetic decisions as to the uses of technology, the differences between **art and life**, **the real and the unreal**, are being utterly and finally obscured. **The Cybernetic Age** is the new Romantic Age.” - Gene Youngblood*

- E.A.T. fulfilled a variety of both practical and symbolic functions, but for the individual artist the **legitimacy** the organization conferred was perhaps as important as the **access** to technology it facilitated.
- Robert Whitman said, “*artists have for the first time had access to professionals on their own level in other worlds. This is a funny thing. Any artist, whether or not he had anything to do with E.A.T., has professional status and is suddenly more respectable.*”
- Such comments reveal the extent to which E.A.T. acted as a conduit between not just two worlds -- **art and technology** -- but between two very different **cultural and economic spheres.**

Additional Resources:

- **The Pavilion: Into The 21st Century - A Laboratory for Social Experimentation** by **Randall Packer**
<http://journal.planetwork.net/article.php?lab=packer0704>
- **The Pavilion:** Directed by **Randall Packer** in collaboration with **Billy Kluver** and **Julie Martin** <http://www.zakros.com/projects/eat/index.html>
- **9 Evenings: Theatre & Engineering**
<http://www.9evenings.org/>
<http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/exhibitions/9evenings/>
- **9 Evenings Reconsidered**
<http://www.fondation-langlois.org/flash/e/index.php?NumPage=571>
- **Frances Dyson: And then it was now**
<http://www.fondation-langlois.org/html/e/page.php?NumPage=2143>