

Labor Day Happening March 29, 2008

To coincide with the Museum of Contemporary Art's (MoCA) Allan Kaprow retrospective, *Allan Kaprow—Art as Life*, Occidental College joined universities and art organizations in Southern California in putting on 'Happenings' in March, April, May, and June. Occidental's Happening, *Labor Day* (1971), took place on Saturday, March 29.

For their recreation of Kaprow's *Labor Day* (1971), Occidental students dumped and re-shoveled one cubic yard of sand at locations in a circular trajectory across the city, beginning and ending at the Mullin Sculpture Building on the College campus. In a second activity, students drove a car on a circular route around the campus, stopping once per "lap" to remove and reinstall the car's wheels.

Occurring simultaneously, the activities are designed to complement each other in their investigation of mental and physical boredom, failure, and fatigue through repetition. Transecting various industrial, ethnic, tourist, and class domains across the city and campus, the progress of this Happening was measured by attrition and loss, labor and exhaustion.

Allan Kaprow (1927-2006) was one of the United States' most influential conceptual artists. Kaprow's retrospective, on view at the Geffen Contemporary at MoCA from March 23, 2008 until June 30, 2008, is a thought-provoking examination of a prolific and innovative career that spanned more than fifty years. Integral to the exhibition are reinventions of Kaprow's famous 'Happenings' of the late 1950s to mid-1970s. Kaprow coined the term 'Happening' in 1957 to define a new conceptual art in which everyday action replaced the 'object' of more traditional art forms, paving the way for Fluxus, Installation, and Performance Art.

MoCA Director Jeremy Strick lauds Kaprow as "a pioneer in the area of performance art—his Happenings blurred the line between art and life and invited spectators to be active participants in the artistic process."

Students in Professor Mary Beth Heffernan's Advanced Projects in Interdisciplinary Arts class and Professor Amy Lyford's History of Photography class will perform the Happening. Professor Tom Folland will give a talk the night before, and there will be a screening of the film documentation the week following.

Participating schools and organizations include the Watts Towers Arts Center, Pitzer College, UC San Diego, the UCLA Hammer Museum, the Getty Center, and the Santa Monica Museum of Art, among others.

Happenings are coordinated by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los

Angeles, and made possible by generous support from the Getty Foundation. Allan Kaprow-Art as Life is organized by the Haus der Kunst, Munich, and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. The exhibition is on view at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA from March 23 to June 30, 2008.

For more information, see the Museum of Contemporary's Kaprow website:
<http://www.moca.org/kaprow/index.php/category/labor-day/>

The retrospective and happenings collaborations were featured in the New York Times.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/13/arts/design/13fink.html?_r=1&scp=16&sq=april+13+2008&st=nyt&oref=slogin