

THE LUDIST MANIFESTO

and other texts



The Ludist Manifesto
and Other Texts

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Foreword

Comments on the Ludist Manifesto, by Alessandra Chesson-Turner

Not too long ago was it that I visited a retrospective-and-survey exhibit in advance of Ludism's first centennial. I saw a wonderful set of paintings, papers on walls, and other pieces for which a mere description won't suffice (so I won't even attempt to write one). However, as I walked through the halls, I encountered a lectern on which the original manuscript for this book was exhibited, and while I was picking my brain as to why Escher's *Print Gallery* was also there, a good friend of mine came over and offered me the task of writing an introduction for this book. How could I attempt to present this text in a way that makes sense for the audiences of a new generation? It goes without saying, I couldn't (and didn't) say no. So, here goes nothing:

At the moment of Ludism's start, there were already long-established trends of dematerialization in art. In the early 21st century, all of the modernists and postmodernists had engaged in their grand narratives, deconstructed all that came before, and each declared their own *end of art*. What was left to do when everything was already done?

Well, the Ludists had an answer: after everything is subverted, you could still subvert subversion itself. Furthermore, in an ironically similar trend to that of all modernisms, they rejected the rejections themselves. Some, in attempts at description of Ludism, have alluded to connections to natural science, particularly the theory of general relativity. This is because, in some way or other, a Ludist piece can be said to have as its ideal to attempt to warp space and time, even if just by the sheer mass of the concept, regardless of (but not without) physical manifestation. In a sense, the first Ludist manifesto could be said to stand as a refutation of Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. As it could be

said that, particularly for the manifesto, it was the very reproduction of the work that constituted its "aura."

For the Ludists, objects were useful, unlike the perspectives of the completely ephemeral artists. They repurposed them to serve as conduits, redirecting our gaze back into the creative impulse itself. So, one could say, that the intention was not just to *have* some creative impulse, but to *turn the creative impulse itself into a deliberate creation*. Gandelman, founder of Ludism, has stated this in some of his writings and interviews. At the time just a utopian vision, he described a future in which a gallerist, a museum curator, a painter, and even an art historian, could collaborate in a singular work of art. A reversal of function as, before Ludism, the roles of gallerist and curator were reserved to a stage of post-creation. This is not to say that those roles were not creative activities at the time, but the overarching idea is to remove linearity from the artistic pipeline (although I have a feeling that Ludens would most likely have said that this was always the case).

But perhaps it would be more productive to describe this in terms of bidirectional linearity. As it is this bidirectionality that defines a lot of Ludist work. Not only in its interactions and play-forms, but in a construction of novel relationships between agent and environment, which sometimes even seep into the subject matter of the works themselves.

Now, this, then, begs a question:

What is this text?

Is this a manifesto as the title explicitly declares? An artist book? A performance?

To all of those questions, the answer is a resounding yes, but above all, it is a living document, its truths manifesting solely because you, dear reader, are engaging with it in this very moment. It is the potential and presence of your interaction that breathes life

into its pages. But this begs another, perhaps more important, question: why are you reading this book?

There's a chance that this is assigned reading in your art history class, or maybe you have some personal interest or stake in the history of the neo-contemporary arts. But if you happen to have found this book laying on the floor at some museum, gallery, fair, or other public setting, just keep on reading.

It was a fateful morning in mid-March, 2024, when Ludism (through its initial performance by Ludens) first attempted to carve its place in the world. It introduced us to a novel invention: The recursive readymade—a revolutionary contribution to the readymade tradition, conveyed through a book. Also a readymade, but one which he happened to make himself.

After that inaugural Ludist piece, Ludensg decided to distance himself creatively from the manifesto's style. This because of what he had later described as a disdain for being "cursed with the onanistic task of being an artist who is forced to curate, critique, represent, and promote his own work". It is safe to say that an air of mystery is a luxury best enjoyed by the successful.

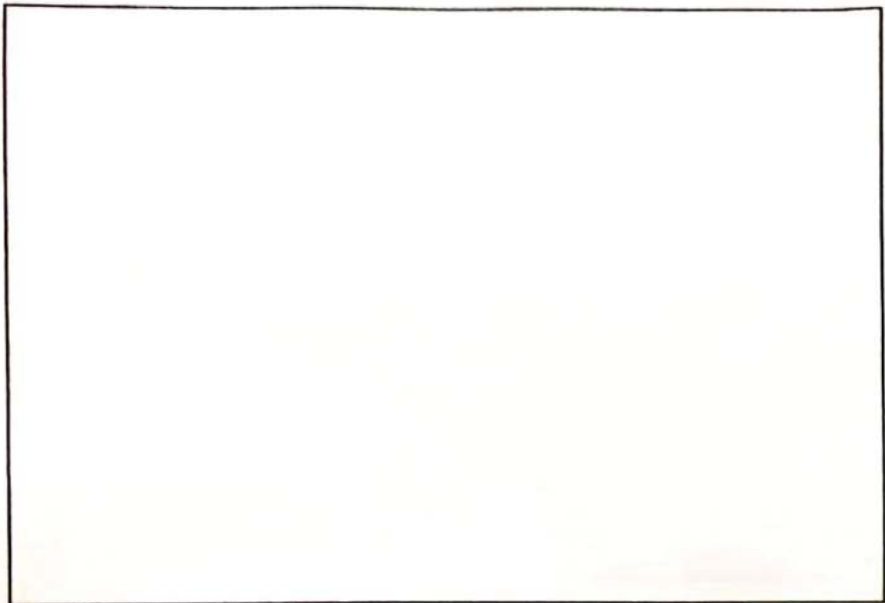
In an effort to make the original performance accessible to you, dear reader (or should I say player?), I have decided to compile multiple sources for this book: First, following the *Instructions for a Recursive Readymade is the first Ludist Manifesto* itself, as well as *The Beginning Ludist's Handbook*. Afterwards, the final section, a set of so-called *Extracts*. Clippings, sketches, and miscellaneous collections, meant to inform those who are willing to be informed.

In the 20th century, our understanding of artistry leapt from the canvas. In the 21st century, art is in the air. Flying, for you and for me. So, then, as we commemorate that fateful mid-march morning, when the air was ripe with potential, let us embrace this manifesto as it was intended, not as a mere artifact, but as a living, breathing, invitation.

Instructions for a Recursive Readymade

1. Acquire a copy of this book.
2. Read these instructions.
3. Visit a place where art is exhibited.
4. Select a room (or an individual piece).
 - i. Select a particular space inside that room (or in front of that individual piece) where you will leave the book.
5. Depict the selected room (or piece) on the cover of the book.
 - i. Preferably including the book itself in said depiction (in the space you have selected).
6. Grace the cover of the book with your signature.
 - i. Also inscribe on it today's date, the current hour, minute, and second.
7. Leave the book in the space you have selected.
8. Do not pick up the book again.
9. Continue with your day.

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The Ludist Manifesto

Foundations

I have been up all night, sweating, banging at typewriters, trying to explain my art to no one, only dead hares. But I'm not crazy. I suspect they are just sleeping.

In seemingly eternal gloom, I wallow in my thoughts, as I notice of art and life;

Everything new ages out into old

Everything old becomes indistinguishable from the dust it once gathered

Everything of dust vanishes into air

Earlier today I saw a Van Gogh bumper sticker on a white van. I saw Cubism, Surrealism, Dada, and modernity as encyclopedia entries with tall price tags. The Rite of Spring, once a starter of riots, is now just a **museum-piece**. The Postmodernists are dead, the Stuckists have become unstuck, Fluxus fluxed its last flux, and everyone else has moved on.

Everything new eventually vanishes into air.

But, alas, air is that which fills my lungs. Air is that which refreshes. Air is that which conducts sound, life, airplanes, and mood. Air is that which takes the photons from the sun, renders them blue in the brightest of days, and shifts them into red over the laziest of your afternoons.

And be you dead, alive, or not born yet, we all share the same air.

Ludism is here. Time has started.

Play has begun.

Game is a Dirty Word

Game is a dirty word. If you're "gaming a system", or "playing games", you are an obtuse gambler, an underhanded manipulator, an insider trader engaging in sophistry, exploiting vulnerabilities with dishonesty. If you "think this is a game" you are a trivializer, unworthy of respect.

In a regular introductory Game Theory class, in any regular mathematics department, in any regular institution, it is not uncommon for the instructor to begin with an excuse: "I know it's called Game Theory, but it's not *really* about games... It's about business, politics, and war!" As if business, politics, and war were pursuits nobler and more deserving of analysis and appreciation than the concept of play.

In this world, in which play has been delegated pervasively to the digital computation of bits at the corner of someone's bedroom, we are at risk of withdrawing further and further from reality. The misdirection of play will end up feeding into the disastrous finite mindset of the toxic and tenured Game Theory instructor. For it is play that fuels business, politics, and war.

But it is this very pervasiveness of play, present from times immemorial, that is calling for a new kind of art to be born, **The Art of the Game**.

English speakers are lucky, they have been blessed with immediate access to the word "fun". Clean, straightforward, beautiful. For some context, its closest relative for Spanish speakers is "diversión," a word polluted by implications of immature distraction. But it is here where we can easily grasp the duality-centered mindset of someone infected by a culture of so-called-seriousness and auto-flagellation: Fun, and by extension play, is diversion, X steps removed from reality and worth less than ~blank~.

Furthermore, *skhole*, Ancient Greek for "school", originally signified **play, leisure, free time**. But somewhere along the path, the world has gone astray. Now, a school is considered better when it is strict and oppressive, and a job is less valuable if you want to do it. **We have associated productivity with pain, and purpose with pay**. The Ludist school hereby reclaims the original meaning. **Free time is paramount. It is time to be free. It is time to play.**

Note: This use of The word "play"
means serious play.

Any and all discussions of play, including this one, requires a preface. A statement that "this use of the word play means serious play".

Bullshit. All play is serious.

Ludism is The Name of The Game

We are playful.

We approach art with boldness, humility, and respect.

We approach games with thoughtfulness and strategy.

We approach games with improvisation and instinctivity.

We value joy, humor, seriousness, freedom, and passion.

We know that one can only play if one plays freely. As someone who isn't free, isn't really in play.

We value skill, be it of the hand, or of the mind.

We believe museums can be a place where art begins, as opposed to a place where art ends up.

We stand in awe of the fertility of the galleries' and museums' white walls. We understand their limitations, and seek to transcend them by means of them. These white walls are hue-less, yet simultaneously reflective of all wavelengths of light. Furthermore, we stand in awe of the museum's unreachable ceilings, as much as its restrooms and hidden electrical rooms. Even its trash cans here are filled with unexplainable air. Every molecule inside these institutions is special, worthy of attention and analysis. For at any moment, they may become vessels for the dwelling of something sacred: art.

We are neither futurists nor archivists. We are the gusts of wind in the museum's hallways. Art defibrillators. We are distributors of meaning, and we deal it to signifiers past, present, and future.

We believe that art is art while it is making itself. All art has been categorized as either process or object. If a concept is the machine that makes the art, we see the game as a machine that makes the concepts that make art.

We aim to embody art. Regardless of medium, we do the art's bidding as best we can. Thus, we are engaging in truly immersive art.

We are simultaneously the horses that drink, and those who lead them to water.

We don't abhor, but deter, functionalism. Play exists for its own sake.

We oppose idolaters of images. This opposition extends to artists, gallerists, collectors, and curators who revere the painted canvas, and the presented image (even if ephemeral or performed). The enforcers of the retinal at the cost of everything else.

Instead, we advocate for the understanding of pieces as network edges.

We seek for no ordinary life. We seek to participate in the transfiguration of the commonplace.

The Ludist has work to do in all spheres: From the smallest, to the largest. From the arts, to the sciences (if there even is a difference). From the personal, to the local, to the universal.

The Ludist isn't just a player. We are collaborators partnered in creation, distributed designers of games, stewards of the gameplay loop.

We are Homo Ludens. We are those who play.

Why?

Because I pity the people who look at a painting and only see an object.

Because metaphors and allusions eventually become just words.

Because when we play we can feel the red strings of fate tugging at our limbs, connecting my hand with your ear through our eyes.

Because the entire world is an installation.

Because the only installation needed is inside your mind.

Because the history of art is not cast in stone, nor is it calcified. It's in the air. It's mine. It's yours.

Because we know that in art, just as in life, there are no summits. Only local maxima.

Because we know that art has no end. Just more beginnings.

Because we know that an -ism is but a piece, and a piece is but a brushstroke.

Because when you listen to dreams you see an Idaho man skating and drinking cran-raspberry juice.

Because if Van Gogh, Gauguin, Toulouse, Degas, and Manet had never decided to take canvases and easels to brothels, the paintings wouldn't have existed.

Because it is up to the artist to enrich life.

Because a painting connects our eyes with things removed.

Because in a universe of estranged people, only the artist possesses the faculties to pave the roads of connection.

Because if you can't afford the latest video game, you watch someone else play it for you.

Because you would much rather spend your days in infinity instead of preparing for finite war and expecting rain.

Because in spite of nihilism you still want to love.

Because we don't hate the players, nor do we hate the game.

Because you know you can't wake up if you don't fall asleep.

Because the world is round, and it turns you on.

Because transparent art, in all of its muddiness, allows for inhabitation. It beckons us.

Because art is art, from the mind, to the hand, to the page, to the canvas, to the eye, to the discarded sketch, to the unfinished work, to the artist statement you have been procrastinating on, to the biweekly crit session, to the stressful phone call, to the thought you don't even know you're currently having.

Because no time is wasted when you move with purpose.

Because it takes work, but it's good work.

Because you need connections to be in the art world, but the connections are also the art.

Because even your pornography sometimes has paintings on a wall.

Because Kusama urges you to enter a room. But in the end, it is the room that enters you.

Because when you look at a screen you don't see a screen. You see through it into all.

Because you know that meaning is both a verb and a noun, but still a singular thing.

Because it takes two to tango.

Because it takes a pitcher, a batter, and a catcher.

Because the pit that opens up in your stomach when a plane hits turbulence makes you feel your body in a new way. And that makes you feel alive.

Because we cry at the movies.

Because abstraction degrades.

Because all of the Pollock drip paintings and all of the Mondrian compositions are no longer abstract. They look like Pollocks and Mondrians.

Because even a modern art museum will eventually become a natural history museum.

Because there are no experts.

Because we've painted a hundred paintings and they remain in storage.

Because we've drawn a thousand sketches and they stay in our sketchbooks.

But when we play, inside is outside, and the hidden comes to light.

Because there is no outsider art.

Because you can only be an outsider in hindsight.

Because all is inside the moment.

Because when the museum plays, so do you.

The Beginning Ludist's Handbook

(Ludism is a Participationism)

I have been forced to write this handbook because all of this has taken long enough. I'm tired of playing alone. **It's your turn to catch up now.**

Artists have for a long time attempted to elevate things to the status of art through re-contextualization. However, it isn't merely the object's presence at the museum that ennoble it. It is **the ever-flowing fabric of play** (the game), already present in all art, which an artist then chooses to direct into certain objects to ennoble them.

Even though play is present in all art, it isn't exclusive to art. **Play is its own thing.** The Ludist goal is to **embody** the forces of play already present in art, and attempt to harness them.

Maybe you are an artist with a taste for the ephemeral and the noncollectable, maybe you're an artist that needs to pay rent, maybe you are a curator, maybe you just like to read things. Whoever you are, **Ludism is for you.** All it takes is to play along. Of course, this inevitably creates a hierarchy of creation, as some people will be more involved in the facilitation of a piece. However, during gameplay, this is irrelevant. A game only works if it works.

What is Ludic Art?

Ludic art is made up of its own unfolding. Paintings, performances, happenings, or actions are incidental, as every ludic piece paradoxically finds its identity within the synergy of its dependencies. This concept has some parallels in recent history with the rise of performance art, ephemeral art, and conceptual art. However, even though these art forms also involve unfolding to some extent (this is a quality of all art), few explore it deliberately.

Therefore, Ludism exists as an extension (or maybe even a contraction) of Joseph Beuys' expanded concept of art. However, as we detail in our manifesto, *we are not big fans of functionalism.* Hence, what the Ludists seek is a *psychotechnological* approach to extended art, as opposed to sociopolitical sculpture. *In this sense we are post-beuysian.*

However, in pertinence to someone who wants to understand what Ludism is: we seek to create **conceptual manifolds**. Metaphorically, these are complex topologies which we can only perceive through thin slices which exist on lower dimensional planes- pieces of art. These pieces may or may not be ephemeral, but their execution and connection constructs something persistent. In other words, **we aim to create something that outlives the process that created it.**

Because of the complex nature of this enterprise, naturally, a lot of helping hands are involved. So, as a Ludist, you must recognize that the charting of art history, the dealing of art, curatorial acts, and even the mere act of observation, are as equally participatory in the creation of a piece as the painter's brush strokes themselves. In this sense, a close relative to the Ludist movement is the Oulipo movement, French pioneers of ergodic literature who experimented with constraints as a creative medium.

The term "ergodic" finds its roots in Greek (*Ergo*- work, and *Hodos*- path). In the context of literature, this refers to a text which requires non-trivial effort from the reader. The reader doesn't just read anymore, now they also have to play.

Some might say that all art is ergodic to some extent, but a ludic piece is the logical conclusion of ergodic art. **A ludic art piece rests (and exists) exclusively on the effort of putting the "pieces" together** (if you think about it, paintings, and performances, are nothing if not effort materialized). So in some ways, this is a cryptic art form (or steganographic, even), as the true work of art is **concealed through different artworks.**

In simpler terms, we can understand a ludic art piece as the game itself. The pieces that constitute it are symbolic pointers towards that game, a concept that exists on a higher level of abstraction, the unobservable manifold. These pointers are the tracks that the concept leaves behind in our physical, observable world. Furthermore, since art is already (and has always been) intrinsically a game, then the Ludist's game is, by its very nature, a meta-game. **A game of games.** Therefore, being the audience to one game inherently means that you are a player in a game of a higher (meta-er) order. And it can go all the way up, just like turtles.

For those of you with keen eyes, you might have probably noticed that I have not yet defined the concept of a game. This would seem to be very important, right? Especially when we consider that the game is akin to the basic

ludic unit of measurement. **A game is a piece, and pieces make a game.** However, I will not attempt to define what a game is (and neither should you, but I won't pretend I can stop you). For, if we attempt to define it, we risk losing something in the process, and that would be sub-optimal.

Furthermore, just like a painter doesn't need to define what a brush is in order to use it, we can abstract this definition away from the equation. However, even if we don't know what a game is, we can describe what it does.

A game, through the all-encompassing tension of play, attracts both the designer and the participant to a new third place. A game, then, helps us travel far away without moving an inch. Ditto with time. Time turns simple objects into antiques. We embed them with new thoughts, we pollute them with nostalgia. And, just like time, art provides us with the means for embedding of thought in material. A game, by sheer estimation and prediction (as well as by pure force of presence and preparedness), through its tension, brings the future closer to the past, and us closer to **ultimate presence.**

This presence is what ultimately defines the feeling of partaking in ludic art. A painting stays in the museum, a performance always ends. **But as long as you are in play, you are present.** In this sense, the Ludist creates the happenings that keep happening.

So, in an effort to convey my findings, I will proceed to detail (to the best of my ability) the resources a Ludist has at his disposal, the elements of the game:

The Elements of the Game

I. Moments

Moments, or states, are the basic unit of a game in the context of time. What determines the progress of the game, is that a certain moment is different to a certain other moment. Hence, games can often be analyzed through finite state machines. And, while some games may have their own unique moments, there are some which I would argue are essential for a game to work.

The first of those moments is *The Shift*. This is a moment of **revelation**. A moment in which your mind realizes that there is something of play going through you. Perhaps something about a particular pattern in a piece led you to

believe that, or perhaps you picked up a book off the floor, and it revealed the game to you. You find something by chance, and in that instant, you're absolutely pulled in. Immersed in a way beyond the capabilities of any installation or virtual reality device, as what you have just seen yourself get immersed into, is the same thing you have always been immersed in. Information. But now, the information has been spiked with art.

That instant, the moment of realization, will be strange. It's as if you were suddenly visited by something. At first, of course, slightly upsetting, as you will almost feel like you're being watched. Which is natural, as you notice that *this very moment*, no matter how seemingly banal, has been composed and constructed by someone else. It goes without saying, but the idea is for this moment to then be followed by something else. **A supreme feeling of connection.** As Ludists, we chase that high.

That wonderful moment of finding meaning in the mutual comfort of meeting eyes with a friendly stranger who, just like you, feels a warmth behind his eyes at the sight of the like-mind.

However, this moment is immediately followed by another one. *The Fork in the Road.* You have to make a decision. Do you play along? Do you help the message reach its destination? Or do you just keep going as if nothing happened?

II. Agents

Agents (understood here as individuals with autonomy) can be described by either what they are in terms of concepts that apply beyond the scope of an individual game (human beings, musicians, painters, construction workers, art dealers, dogs, mathematicians, carpenters), or what they choose to become inside the game-world. It is this choice which lands them a role.

III. Roles

Every game is a role playing game. And while, just like moments, any game will have particular roles. However, there are some abstract roles which not only describe participation inside the game-world, but without which the game-world wouldn't even exist.

In that manner of thinking, we can classify roles in the same way we would the components of a circuit, through an extended (though not very precise) metaphor.

Conductors: Just like in an orchestra, the conductor allows for the flow of action. However, the conductor is not concerned with the end goals of a piece. The conductor is just occupied with letting the current flow through them first. Everyone who participates in a game, even those who design them, are conductors in some sense. All players have some degree of conductivity, but the archetypal conductor is the museum-goer. The people willing to engage with the artworks, those who facilitate the circulation of ideas.

Power Sources: Artists serve as the power sources in the circuit by being the sources of creation. They provide the necessary input to infuse the system with energy.

Switches: Institutions that facilitate play (galleries, museums, collectors) act as switches in the circuit. They have the ability to control the flow of artistic content, much like switches control the flow of electricity in a circuit.

Power Suppliers: There's no circuit without power. Their support sustains the infrastructure of the game world, ensuring that artists can create, institutions can operate, and players can engage with art.

The Engineer: Someone has to design the circuit, and thus, the engineer becomes an intrinsic part of the circuit itself.

IV. Signifiers

Just like any other language, a game has signifiers, which point to some signified meaning. In the case of art, we may look at composition, and subject matter as signifiers. Or, if we take a more fine-grained approach, we could look towards line, shape, texture, form, space, color and value, mark making, and materiality.

These, in theory, still apply in Ludic art. However, the main factor which differentiates Ludic art, is the fact that **even the signified** in a certain piece of art **can become** a Ludic art piece's **signifier**.

Because Ludism is a nascent art form, we have a slightly limited palette. But more experimentation may yield more knowledge on the signifiers of the Ludic piece. As of now, the ones that I have observed include **agency-value**, **player-base**, **accessibility**, **difficulty**, **content**, **context**, **objectives**, and **length**.

Furthermore, the means we have as designers to set up these broad signifiers are the start, middle, and end states of a game, which are determined by rules.

V. Rules

The stereotypical artist is believed to have contempt for rules. This isn't true for the Ludist. We know that constraints set us free, as rules delimit a game's existence.

Any art movement can be considered as a game with its own rules. The rules for Cubism (in simple terms, for the sake of brevity) consisted of the exploration, and overlapping, of multiple planes of perspective in a single painting. If you don't do that, you are disqualified from the game of Cubism. Furthermore, if you set out to do a Cubist painting and you don't follow its rules, you have entered an end state in which you have lost! You wanted a Cubist painting and ended up with something else. You were playing tag while Picasso was playing hide-and-seek.

Remember, **the structural integrity of a game is determined by the cohesiveness and consistency of its rules**, and the pay-off for following a game's rules is its end-state(s).

VI. End States

Games have different end states corresponding to their objectives and styles.

There are many types (or classes) of games, each differentiated from the rest by having its own set of rules and end states. Among them you have hide-and-seek, tag, capture the flag, kickball, dodgeball, hopscotch, Simon says, poker, blackjack, solitaire, platformers, stealth, language games, rogue-like, rhythm, battle royale, sandbox, and, of course, the strand-type game.

So yes, there are many types of games. However, if we analyze the structures of games with an object-oriented approach, we can observe a certain level of inheritance. For example, Sid Meier's Civilization VI is an instance of the broader class of Civilization games, which is itself an instance of a broader class of game, Turn-Based Strategy (as opposed to Real-Time Strategy), which itself is an instance of the broader class of game, the strategy game.

So here, we have determined that genre is a game unto itself. But most importantly, for the sake of understanding games at as high a level as possible, we have to find the most abstract classes of games. And these are them, as described by James P. Carse:

There are at least two classes of games. Finite and Infinite Games.

Finite Games are played for the purpose of winning. Hence, they come to an end when someone has won, and the players must, therefore, agree on both boundaries (temporal, spatial, and numerical) and a winner (only one person or team can win). In this context, time is spent when playing the game, and it is therefore defined by external means (dates, places, participants). Therefore, Finite Games exist within finite worlds, which are destroyed when the game ends.

Finite Games breed competition. Everyone enters the game with the hopes of either winning, or aiming for the highest possible ranking.

Infinite Games are played for the purpose of continuing the play. The only purpose is to prevent it from coming to an end, to keep everyone in play. Infinite games are boundaryless, they create time instead of spending it. No eligibility is required, anyone who wishes to play can join. Therefore, it is internally defined; an Infinite Game does not take place in time. It defines its own time. Therefore, it's impossible to determine how long an Infinite Game has been, or can be, played. It is also impossible to tell in which world an Infinite Game is played, as there can be any number of worlds within an infinite game.

Finite games can be played within an infinite game, and infinite games cannot be played within a finite game.

An infinite player regards their wins and losses in whatever finite games they play, not as goals or failures, but as moments spent in continuing play.

The Concept of Universality - Theory of Ludism

This section of the guide is aimed at those who aspire to become **designers of games**. A very complex task, which requires dense explanation,

as the goal is to find a grammar with the potential of abstractly describing any game's behavior. If finite and infinite games are the broadest view of the game, this concept of universality rests on an atomic and reductionist view.

The mechanics that make Ludism possible are consequences of art's quality of universality as a language. In other words, everything can be conveyed through art. Universality, in the context of theory of automata, refers to the ability of a computational model to simulate any other automaton, including itself. The most well-known universal automaton is the Universal Turing Machine, a theoretical construct that, given enough time and memory, can perform any computation that any other Turing machine can.

This provides us with an analogy which we can use to understand Ludism as a system which aims to be universal, in partnership with art. And through analyzing two of the possible procedures of art, we can find the means for achieving this.

Iterative Art Functions: A non-ludic art piece is inherently iterative. Meaning that (for example) every painting, or set of paintings, only stands alone and for itself. Hence, one could say that they have linear aims and means, and are mostly self-contained. However, these iterative processes can compound over time to generate complex behavior. And they have. A set of iterative pieces (some foundational and innovative, others exploratory and either branching or derivative) will inevitably generate art movements.

Ludism relies on (at least the attempt of) **designing complex systems**. Which means, in simpler terms, that we (as Ludists) aim to find the tools with which we could simulate and design (for example) the complex behavior of an art movement.

Primitive Recursive Art Functions: this is an approach in which each piece (or series of pieces) has the **capability of evolving through a progression of transformations**. This process, inherently systematic, operates by applying a set of predetermined rules or operations to initiate a piece (in the abstract sense, a first trace of a ludic piece), which then serves as the basis for subsequent iterations. Each iteration is derived from the last. Through this, we can uphold an environment in which artists can engage with art as a dynamic system where initial forms exhibit **simplicity in isolation, but in communication create depth and intricacy in an**

overarching resulting artwork. If iterative art functions are linear, primitive recursive functions are *reactive*, and can ultimately be unpredictable.

Remember, it is exclusively through a simple initial configuration through which we can access complexity. Through a discipline of application of transformations, these functions give us the tools for the construction of rich, emergent patterns and structures to unfold from a clear, approachable, and ordered process.

In simpler terms, this is a thorough definition of the elements that make up the *gameplay loop*. These functions are to the game designer what paint is to the painter, as it is through intricate interactions between functions that the previously discussed elements of games emerge.

Go Play

So, there you have it. Now, with all this, you should be able to go out and play (as if you weren't able to do that before). But, before you go I want to leave you with my last, summarized, thoughts:

Remember that this is not a manifesto. **This is just a game.**

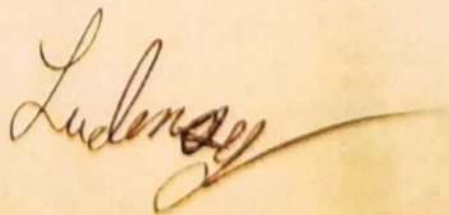
Remember that **you have agency.**

Remember that **you can't play alone.**

Remember that all good art is living, but **the best art is breathing.** If only for a little while.

And, most importantly, remember that **a Ludist is always a beginner.**

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ludens". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

$$\partial_\epsilon q = \underline{\underline{D}} \nabla^2 q + R(q)$$

$$i \gamma^\mu \partial_\mu \psi(x) - m \psi(x) = 0$$

$$\phi = \begin{pmatrix} \phi_1 \\ \phi_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$G_{\mu\nu} + \Lambda g_{\mu\nu} = K T_{\mu\nu}$$

$$|\Phi^*\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|V\rangle_1, |H\rangle_2 + |H\rangle_1, |V\rangle_2)$$

$$r_g = \frac{2GM}{c^2}$$

Extracts

ervation. In politics, the form drive results in abstract principles; the sense drive results in sensuality.

In Letter 14, Schiller suggests that when a human experiences both these drives in balance—“at once conscious of his freedom and sensible of his existence” and can “feel himself to come to know himself as mind”—a new drive is awakened, namely the play drive (*Spieltrieb*) (NA XX, 351/E 126). In the play drive, both other drives “work in concert”; they are “directed and annulling time *within time*, reconciling becoming with absolute being and change with eternity” (NA XX, 351/E 126). In holding the first two drives in harmony, the play drive frees humans of the domination of each:

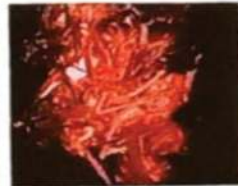
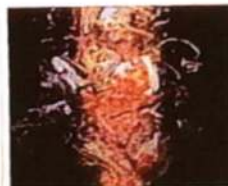
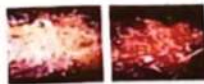
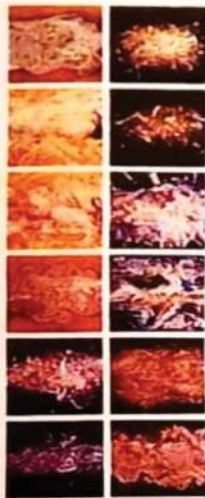
to the extent that it deprives feelings and passions of their dynamic power, it will bring them into harmony with the ideas of reason; and to the extent that it deprives the laws of reason of their moral compulsion, it will reconcile them with the interests of the senses. (NA XX, 352/E 127)

Thus, if this balance can be achieved, the human will be given “an intuition of his human nature, and the object afforded him this vision would become for him a symbol of his *accomplished destiny*” (NA XX, 353/E 126).

What, then, can awaken the play drive? In Letter 15, Schiller suggests that each drive also has a specific object. The object of the sense drive is life; the object of the form drive is form. Because the play drive allows these drives to act in concert, its object is *living form* (*lebende Gestalt*) (NA XX, 357/E 129). Living form, in turn, is nothing less than beauty. Beautiful objects, then, can put humans in a state in which we realize our highest potential. When, to use Schiller’s example, we contemplate *St. Ludovisi*, we feel our sense drive and our form drive perfectly equalized. In such a moment, we find ourselves at one and the same time in a state of utter repose and extreme agitation” (NA XX, 360/E 132).

Since the contemplation of beauty leaves us dominated neither by the sense drive nor by the form drive, the play drive “gives rise to freedom” (NA XX, 373/E 141); it allows the will, which exists independently of both drives, to choose between them (NA XX, 371/E 142). This freedom does not relate to our ability to articulate and follow the moral law. Freedom is rather the ability to situate a law and our sensuous desires and choose between them. In facilitating this ability and bringing freedom, the contemplation of beauty completes the concept of human nature (NA XX, 373/E 128). So as soon as reason “utters the pronouncement: let humanity exist, it has by that pronouncement also promulgated the law: let there be beauty” (NA XX, 374/E 129). Plus, Schiller reiterates, allows humans to fulfill their very natures: “man only plays when he is in the full use of the word a human being, and he is only fully a human being when he plays” (NA XX, 374/E 131).

Humanity’s ability to free our minds of determinations explains an apparent paradox. On the one hand, we are determined by our nature, but on the other, we are free to transcend it. (NA XX, 374/E 131)



As I hold the key to the back door of the world
I feel my hand touching bounds never had before

I can view the power of my position
And my eyes can see more than anyone in any place
I'll play the game and never ever lose

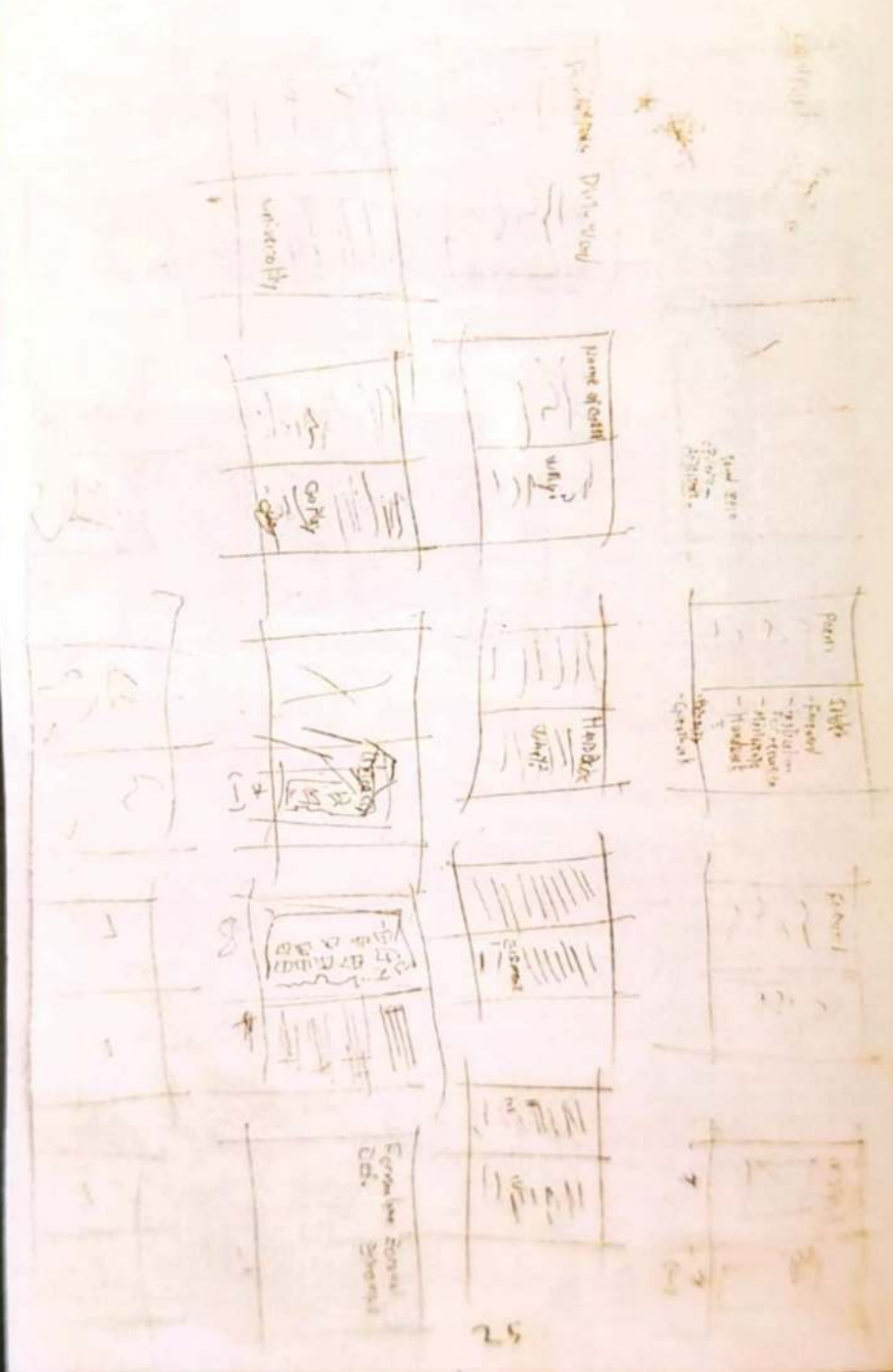
I'm the king in fighting competition
And the other pieces are there for

my art and my teeth
canow

My thoughts never spoken only the visions inside my head
The truth never broken within my silent words left unsaid

No words that I'm the knave can alter my philosophy
For if any are heard,

It can change, it can stay the same,
Who can say, who can make their claim
The situation we are in at this time
Neither a good one, nor is it so unbleat
It can change, it can stay the same,
I can say, I can make my claim.



Formal Definition of a Turing Machine
(Proof for Universality)

Lemma: A Turing machine L is recognized as RT by Art Turing Machine A

$$A = (Q_A, \Sigma_A, \Gamma_A, \delta_A, q_{0A}, F_A)$$

$Q_A \rightarrow$ finite set of states

$\Sigma_A \rightarrow$ input alphabet

$\Gamma_A \rightarrow$ tape alphabet

$\delta_A \rightarrow$ transition function: $Q_A \times \Gamma_A \rightarrow Q_A \times \Gamma_A \times \{L, R\}$

$q_{0A} \rightarrow$ initial state

$F_A \rightarrow$ set of accept states

$$L = (S, I, T, \delta, s_0, F)$$

δ \rightarrow initial state
 F \rightarrow final/accepting states
 S \rightarrow states
 I, T \rightarrow inputs/symbols

$\forall L$, there exists $\delta: S \times I \rightarrow S \times T^*$
 a series of interactions or states
 that meet A 's art criteria C

Given a recognition function $R: L \rightarrow \{\text{true}, \text{false}\}$
 where $R(L) = \text{true}$ iff L satisfies
 all criteria C

Art of This Century is inseparable from Peggy Guggenheim's claim to a place in the history of twentieth century art.

Art of This Century Guggenheim's claim to a place in the history of twentieth century art



The interior gallery of Peggy Guggenheim Museum gallery, Art of This Century, 30 West 57th Street, New York, 1942



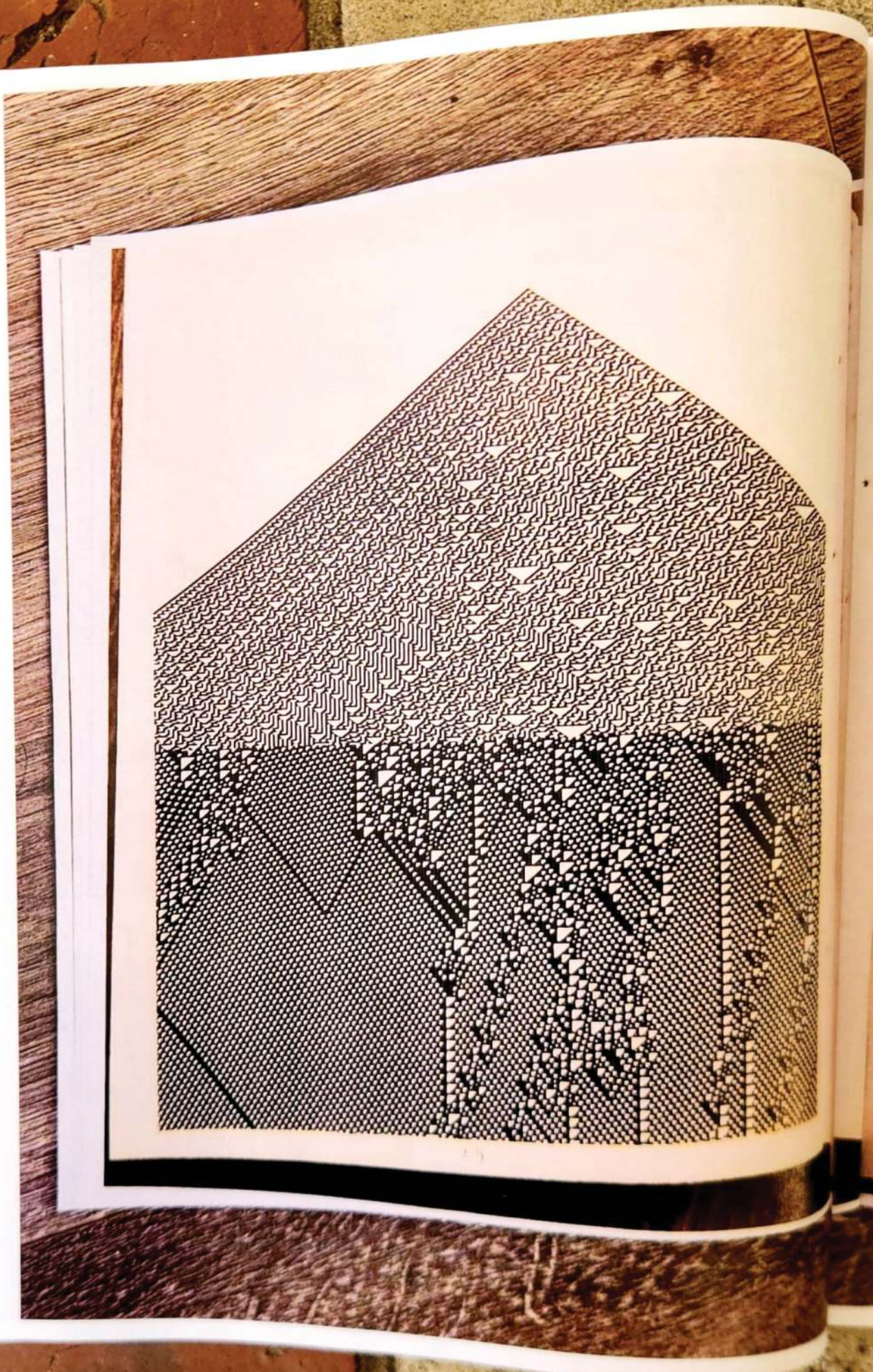
Art of This Century is inseparable from Peggy Guggenheim's claim to a place in the history of twentieth century art.

An inquiry into this museum gallery's importance for what was to emerge as a crucial period in the development of American painting is tantamount to assessing Peggy's personal contribution to the ineffable grid of forces and influences that gave rise to Abstract Expressionism. The dual function of Art of This Century (a permanent collection and a selling gallery with temporary shows) aptly captures Peggy's position on the crossroads between a European past and an American future. The permanent collection, installed with remarkable conceptual inventiveness in Frederick Kiesler's outlandish abstract, surrealist, and Kinetic galleries, was a further tessera in the mosaic of the New York artists' bohemia.

musbeippl



Art of This Century
1939-1942
New York



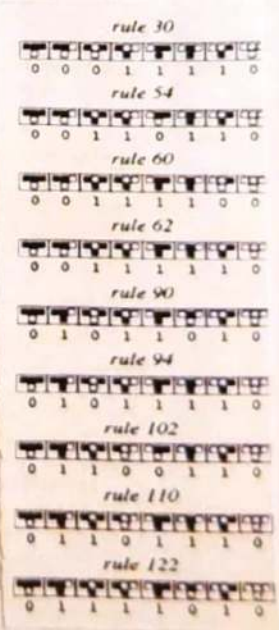
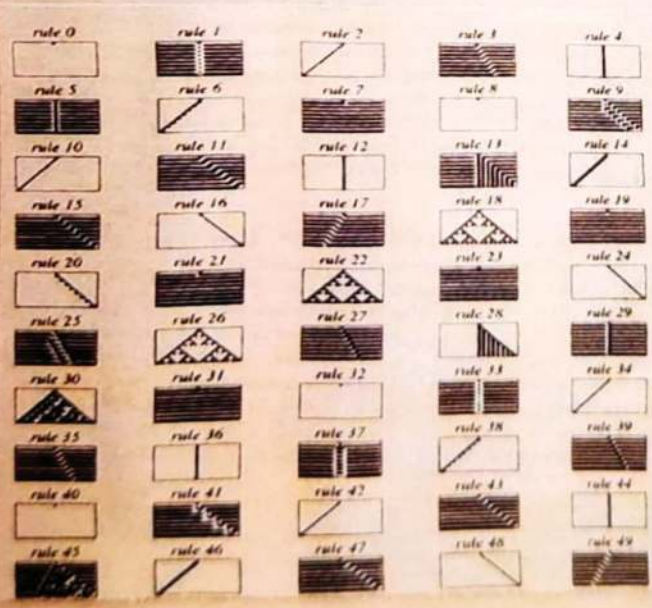
SECRET No.56: 続兵器のない世界!
 イベント「核廃絶」を見てみよう!

第二章以降に以下の4つの条件を満たすと、メインミッションクリア時、またはマザーベースへの帰還時に、イベント「核廃絶」が発生する。条件の一部は明かせないが、ぜひともイベント発生に挑戦してみしてほしい。なお、このイベントは条件を達成しさえすれば何度でも発生する。

イベント「核廃絶」を発生させる条件

- 条件1: メインミッション「31-サヘラントロプス」をクリア
- 条件2: 続兵器を保有していない、かつ開発中ではない
- 条件3: 自身がプレイしているプラットフォーム(PlayStation3, PlayStation4, Xbox 360, Xbox One, Steam)のサーバー上で特定の条件が満たされる
- 条件4: 条件3を満たしたあと、自身がプレイしているプラットフォーム(PlayStation3, PlayStation4, Xbox 360, Xbox One, Steam)のサーバー上ですべての続兵器が廃棄され、続兵器開発がゼロになった*

* 条件4が達成されたあと、再び開発条件が達成されるには、条件3が満たされなければならない。



Just a Regular Cheese Salesman

We can take it for granted that [redacted] used a slice of Swiss cheese, because cheese showing big eyes ('eye' being the official term for the 'hole' in hard and semi-hard cheese) in a large quantity even when produced elsewhere is always a derivation or variety of Swiss cheese originally manufactured in Switzerland. This is especially true for big eyed Dutch cheese.

Messrs [redacted] Schwarz and [redacted] Naumann claim that what [redacted] used was Gruyère cheese or so called 'Greyerzer'. As much as I respect the expertise of these two eminent [redacted] scholars, I am afraid that in this particular case they are mistaken. In my book on [redacted] I wrote that [redacted] Emmentaler cheese. I shall briefly explain why there is little room for debate. Before going any further I simply recommend to stop by at some local cheese dealer. It won't be the first time that blunt empirical (sensual) observation will refute scholastic (rational) conclusion. The finest loaf of Gruyère cheese I saw and tasted in recent times had a shelf life of 12 months, in addition to the approximate six months of ripening before going on sale. It had next to no eyes, just a few haircracks due to its age. And indeed, Gruyère is supposed to have no or only a few and then but small eyes. The very fine cracks are a sign of age and quality. They're officially called 'glas' – a local, colloquial term I cannot translate. On the other hand, large quantities of eyes of all sizes are typical for Emmentaler cheese. One reason why it is hard to confuse Gruyère and Emmentaler cheese is that the former underwent a smear ripening and the latter a dry-ripening process.



Swiss-type cheese was originally manufactured in the Emmen valley in Switzerland. Its precursors were mountain cheeses. Gruyère cheese can be understood as such since there is still a (very aromatic) mountain variation produced. So, as a nutritive product, Gruyère cheese may be more ancient than Emmentaler, but this is not the point. The 1000-2000 round eyes – the diameters of which range from less than half an inch to one and a half inches – which we find in one single loaf of Emmentaler cheese are caused by propionic acid fermentation. Yet, the quantum of propionic acid is very low in Gruyère cheese (arithmetic mean of 10.0), but very high in Emmentaler cheese (a. m. of 84.0).

Therefore, by means of fermentation Gruyère cheese can develop some eyes, but never a great many of them, and at no point can they be big. Propionic acid fermentation is brought about by short-rod propionic acid bacteria, which occur naturally in the rumen and intestine of ruminants (bon appetit!). Their name is *propionibacterium freudenreichii subsp. shermanii*. Additional heterofermentative lactic acid fermentation ensures that with Emmentaler cheese the building and growing of eyes will continue where in other (smear ripening) cheeses the process soon discontinues itself. The characteristic eye formation of Emmentaler cheese is due mainly to the presence of carbon dioxide produced by propionic acid bacteria during lactic acid breakdown. The steep rise in the production of carbon dioxide coincides with the onset of the propionic acid fermentation. Eye formation is a lengthy process. The maximum rate is attained after about 30 days, which is also the time of rapid eye enlargement. Eye formation can be so aggressive that it sometimes continues in the cold room.

For further reading I recommend P. F. Fox (Ed.), *Cheese: Chemistry, Physics and Microbiology*, Elsevier Applied Science, London and New York, 1987, volume 2, Major Cheese Groups, pages 93-120 (chapter 3, Swiss-type varieties, by C. Stollen, E. Flueckiger, J. O. Bessis and M. Borel), the Federal Dairy Research Institute, Liebefeld-Bern, Switzerland), from where I got most of the shared information above. The chapter is accompanied by wonderful illustrations that leave very little room for confusion.

On the Validity of Interpretation and the Diagonalization Theorem for the Cardinality of Art

Or One, and Three, and an Uncountable Infinity of Chairs

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Abstract—This study delves into the confluence of set theory—specifically Cantor's diagonalization theorem—and art theory, introducing a novel framework (the idea of potential art) to conceptualize the range of creative possibility in the context of art. Through a synthesis of mathematical constructs with artistic paradigms, we unveil the inherent infinity within the act of art creation and perception, positing that the domain of all conceivable art, or the *Art Space*, extends beyond countable infinities.

I. INTRODUCTION

The endeavor to attempt to comprehend the scope of art through the lens of mathematical rigor does not present itself in exact formula, but as a means for taking a glimpse into possibility. The core of our investigation leverages Cantor's diagonal argument, a cornerstone of set theory, to forge a comprehensive framework that helps us elucidate the boundaries of art. By regarding each artwork as akin to a mathematical set, capable of engendering a limitless spectrum of interpretations, we find the means to apply methodical analysis.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Set Theory

Set theory, a cornerstone of proto-modern mathematical logic, provides the foundational language for discussing collections of objects.

Sets: A set is defined by its elements, with the notation $\{a, b, c\}$ representing a set consisting of elements a , b , and c . One of the fundamental properties of a set is that it does not consider the order of its elements, nor does it account for multiplicity; each element is unique within the set and exists as either a member or a non-member of the set. This binary characteristic underscores the set's foundational role in building more complex mathematical structures and theories.

Power Sets: Given any set S , the power set of S , denoted $P(S)$, is the set of all possible subsets of S , including the empty set and S itself. The power set is significant for its comprehensive encapsulation of all the ways the elements of a set can be combined or partitioned.

Central to set theory is the distinction between finite and infinite sets, an insight that revolutionizes our understanding of quantity and magnitude. Beyond this, set theory introduces the concept of **cardinality**, a means to compute the sizes of sets that extends beyond mere counting to encompass

the notion of different "sizes" of infinity. Georg Cantor's pioneering work in the late 19th century established that not all infinities are equal, revealing a startling and counterintuitive hierarchy among infinite sets. This revelation, that the set of real numbers is "larger" than the set of natural numbers (despite both being infinite).

In essence, a set is **countable** if its elements can be mapped onto the set of natural numbers, and **uncountable** if not.

B. Cantor's Diagonalization Argument

The diagonalization argument (Cantor, 1891) displays an interesting demonstration of the power of abstract thought to reveal the unexpected structures within the infinite. In constructing a simple yet profound proof, Cantor showed that the set of real numbers cannot be enumerated, that is, it cannot be put into a one-to-one correspondence with the set of natural numbers, thereby proving its **uncountability**.

The essence of this argument involves assuming the contrary—that such an enumeration exists—and then demonstrating the existence of a real number that could not possibly be included in this enumeration, effectively constructing a process that ensures its digits differ from those of any enumerated real number at some decimal place. This method, often visualized through a diagonal traversal of a hypothetical list of all real numbers, not only solidified the understanding that there are different sizes of infinity but also introduced a potent tool for exploring the boundaries of the cultural real.

C. Art Theory

Artistic discourse, particularly around conceptual art, provides valuable insights into the nature of artistic creation and interpretation. Joseph Kosuth, in his seminal text "Art and Philosophy" (1969), asserts that the value and meaning of art lie not in its physical manifestation but in the concepts it embodies. This perspective shifted the focus of aesthetic significance, emphasizing art as an idea-based practice. Kosuth's argument aligns with the notion that an artwork's essence is rooted in its capacity to provoke thought and inspire interpretation, a viewpoint that resonates with the interpretive flexibility proposed in our framework.

Similarly, Sol LeWitt, in "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" (1967), articulates a vision of art where the idea or concept is the most important aspect, stating "The idea becomes

... production and its dematerialization. LeWitt's emphasis on the primacy of the conceptual over the physical further reinforces the argument that art's true nature is abstract and defined by material limitations.

... philosophical underpinnings of art's interpretative nature (further elaborated in aesthetic theories that delve into the relationship between art, beauty, and perception). The dialogues in aesthetics, from Plato's musings on the ideal forms to post-structuralist debates on the subjective experience of art, underscore the complexity of formal definitions and conceptions of art.

... these conceptual foundations, an emphasis on conceptual art, interpretive plurality, and the evolving nature of art's significance offer a framework for understanding the scope of potential art.

III. ART SPACE: THE SET OF ALL POTENTIAL ART

Through art-set theory we introduce a novel conceptual framework, herein referred to as **Art Space**. This framework encompasses all potential art. That is, the entirety of artistic possibilities, including all conceivable artworks and their interpretations. By adopting set-theoretical principles, we propose that the Art Space is not merely vast but fundamentally *unstable*.

Defining The Art Space

The Art Space is conceptualized as a construct that encompasses every possible artwork, spanning across mediums, styles, periods, and cultures. This space is not limited by the physicality of artworks or the temporality of artistic movements; rather, it extends into the realms of the yet-to-be-conceived.

Artworks as Infinite Sets of Interpretations

Central to our framework is the proposition that each artwork within an Art Space can be viewed as an infinite set of interpretations. This perspective is informed by the aforementioned art theories which argue for the primacy of concept over materiality and the subjective nature of artistic interpretation (Kosuth, 1969; LeWitt, 1967). Every engagement with an artwork, whether it be visual, intellectual, emotional, or cultural, contributes to the creation of a new interpretation, as resulting in the following lemma:

Lemma 1. *Let A be an artwork. If we assume that any given artwork is an interpretation machine, then, each separate interpretation $I(A)$ generates a separate, new, artwork A' as understood by an observer.*

Therefore, any given artwork is defined through the infinite subset of all its possible interpretations: $A = P(I(A)*)$

This plurality and infinitude of interpretations underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of the artistic field, where each interaction with an artwork is a unique event contributing

... exist until a certain point in time; at any given point the Art Space becomes a countably infinite set.

C. Uncountability of Art Space

Now, consider an **Absolute Art Space**. That is, an Art Space without time constraints, including future potential. To demonstrate the uncountability of such an Art Space, we turn to Cantor's diagonalization argument, a seminal proof in set theory that establishes the existence of uncountable sets (Cantor, 1891). By means of analogy, we propose a thought experiment: assume it were possible to enumerate every interpretation of every artwork within the Art Space into a list. Following Cantor's method, we could alter an aspect of each interpretation in the list. Through concatenating these alterations, we can construct a new interpretation ensuring it differs from every listed interpretation at least in one respect.

To elucidate this thought experiment further, let us apply this to *One and Three Chairs* by Joseph Kosuth (1965). This artwork consists of a physical chair, a photograph of a chair, and a printed definition of the word "chair" from a dictionary.

Step 1: Enumeration of Interpretations: Suppose we could enumerate every possible interpretation on *One and Three Chairs* (artwork A) into a list of infinite interpretations:

$$I(A)* = \{I_1, I_2, I_3, \dots\}, \text{ where}$$

$I_1(A) = \text{"a commentary on the Platonic theory of forms, distinguishing between the physical object and its ideal form."}$

$I_2(A) = \text{"a critique of the commodification of craft, contrasting the tangible chair with its representations."}$

$I_3(A) = \text{"a meta-analysis on the nature of communication."}$

and so on...

Step 2: Refactoring of Interpretations Following Cantor's method, we derive three new interpretations by altering elements of original ones.

From $I_1(A)$ we can change the focus from the Platonic theory of forms to the concept of perception versus reality, maintaining the distinction between physical objects and their perceived meanings. This results in $I'_1(A)$.

From $I_2(A)$ we modify the critique to be merely a commentary on the concept of value, contrasting the inherent value of an object with its commercial value. This results in $I'_2(A)$.

From $I_3(A)$ we shift the overarching emphasis of the piece from the act of communication, towards the act of interpretation. This results in $I'_3(A)$.

Step 3: Construction of a New Interpretation We amalgamate the alterations

Figure 1: An exploration of perception versus reality, contrasting inherent value with commercial value, while highlighting the multiplicity of meanings and the presence of interpretation that an object can come to different viewers.

Step 4: Infinite Diagonalization Even though these changes result in new interpretations already, there's always a chance that the new interpretation overlaps with some subsequent entry of the infinite list. However, the way we arrive at a new interpretation, is through following the previous steps throughout the entire infinite list. This would always, as proven by Cantor's method, generate a new, not previously included interpretation.

IV. CONCLUSION

Therefore, we have proven that the Art Space, composed of all potential art, is **uncountably infinite**.

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Twenty men crossing a bridge
Into a village
Are twenty men crossing twenty bridges,
Into twenty villages,
or one man
Crossing a single bridge into a village

This is old song...
That will not declare itself...

o o o o o o o
o o o o o o o
o o o o o o o

So the meaning escapes.

*Three Thousand One-hundred and Twenty-Five
Blades of Grass*

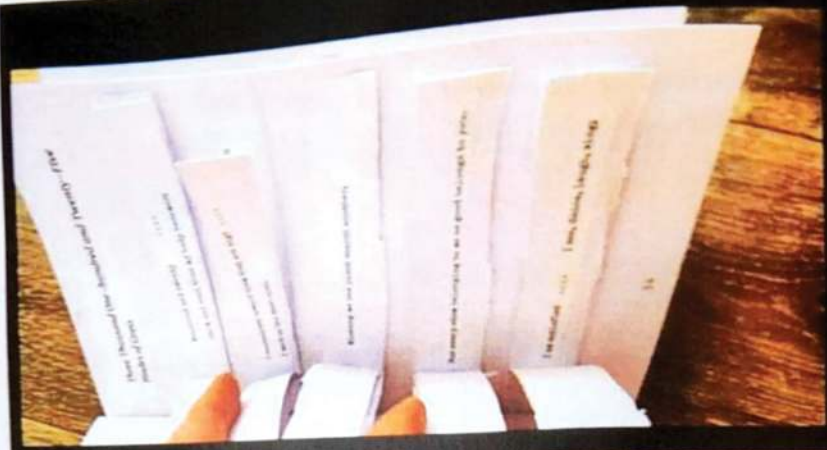
My respiration and inspiration
..... the beating of my heart

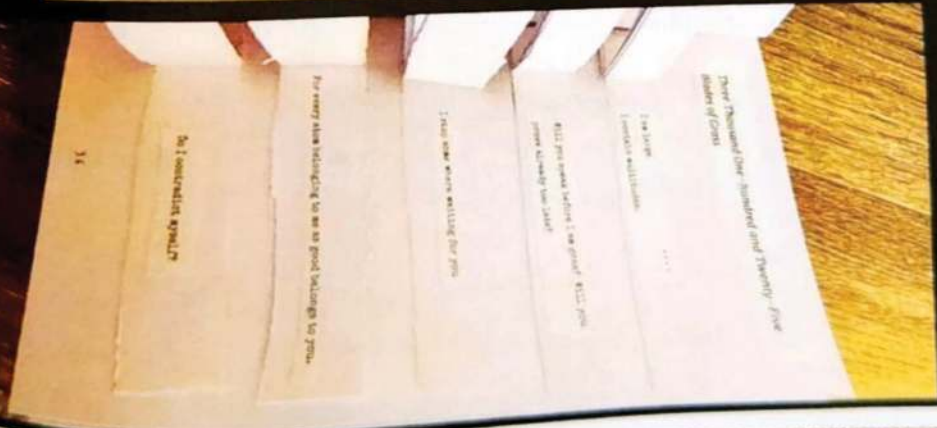
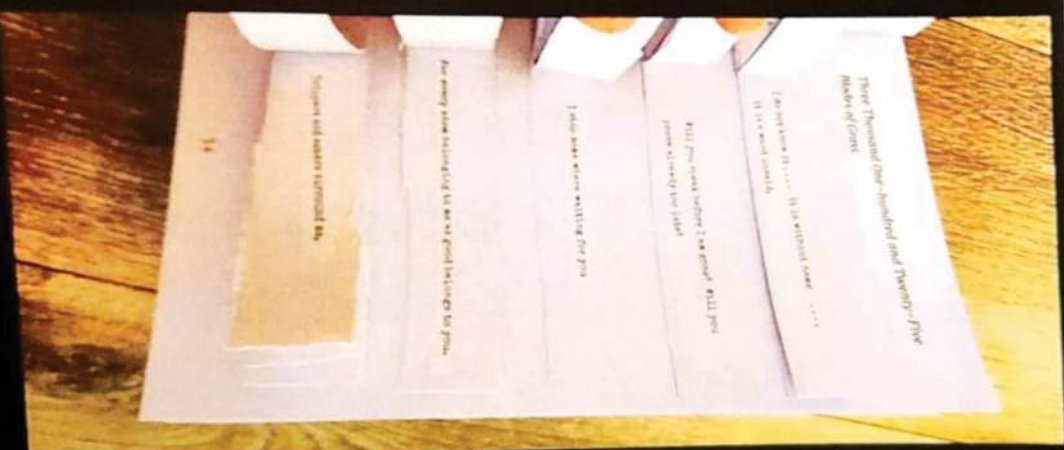
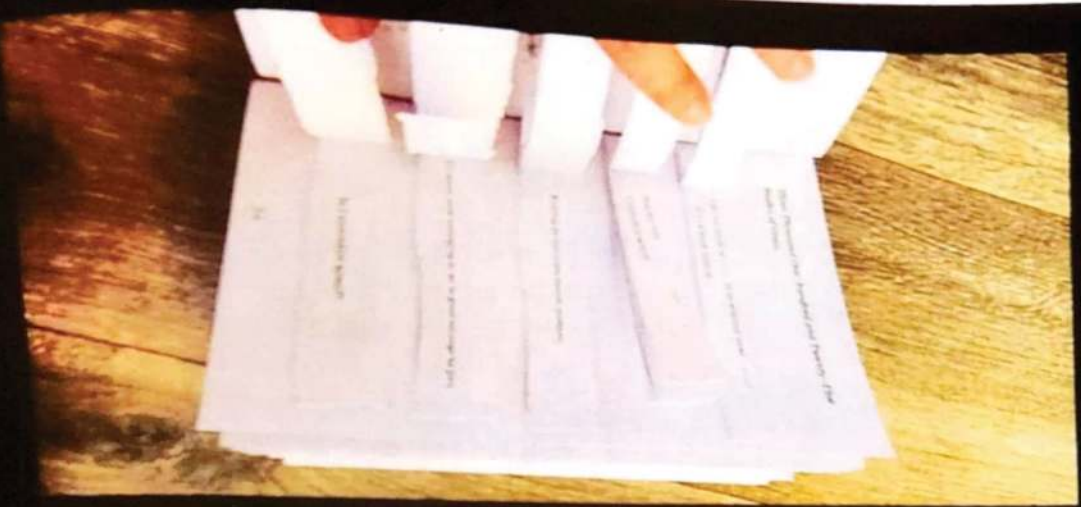
Lack one lacks both
and the unseen is proved by the seen,

I do not know it it is without name
it is a word unsaid,

I breathe the fragrance myself, and know it and like it,

In me the caresser of life wherever moving backward
as well as forward slueing,

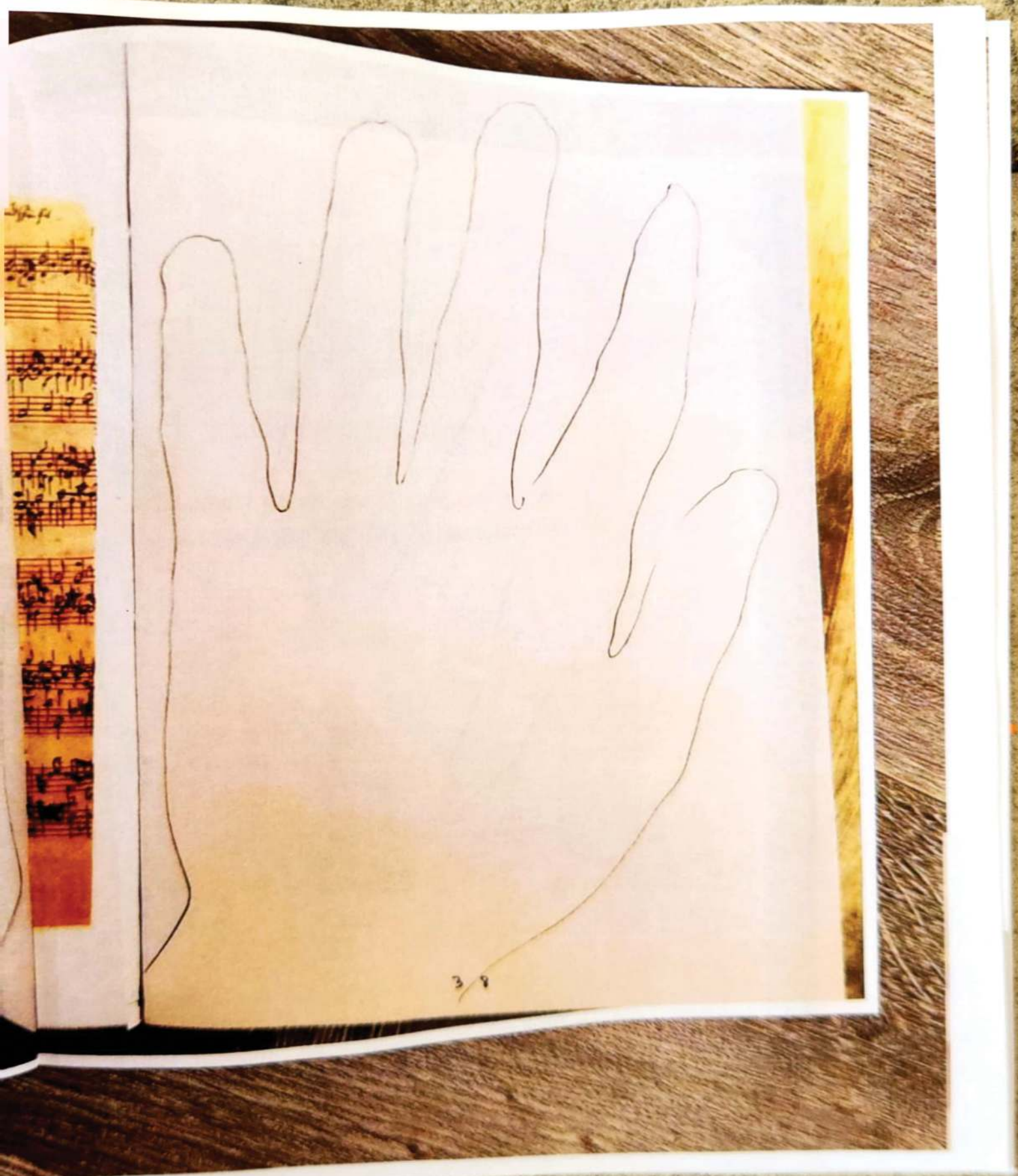




Einige Figuren von P. S. Bach 2. originaler Handschrift.

A page of handwritten musical notation, likely a manuscript by Johann Sebastian Bach. The page contains six systems of music, each consisting of two staves. The notation is in black ink on aged, yellowish paper. The first system begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. At the bottom center of the page, there is a circular red stamp with the text "Musikbibliothek Bonn" and "1880".

A partial view of the adjacent page of the musical manuscript, showing several systems of handwritten musical notation on aged paper. The notation is similar to the page on the left, with two staves per system.



Handwritten musical notation on a yellowed strip of paper, including staves and notes.

3 8



Guestbook & Provenance

Danny Elliot says hello. (06/14/29)

I'm going up to New York City

(I'll be back soon)

But

remember,





Your music sings to me like a record

I am of mortal coil

I shall do my best

