

Primitivism and Experimental Pedagogy

Allan Kaprow's Night (1961)

Emily Ruth Capper

Abstract

Allan Kaprow developed his earliest happenings as a college professor in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a time of dramatic change in American student culture. In his pedagogy and happenings alike, Kaprow sought to push student participants towards greater self-consciousness, often by defamiliarizing popular cultural forms and social rituals. A case in point is the happening *Night*, which Kaprow created at the University of Michigan in 1961. This paper reconstructs Kaprow's collaboration with Michigan students. It shows how *Night's* score fragmented, abstracted, and recombined motifs from student rituals that were rooted in racialized primitivist fantasies and designed and practiced by an overwhelmingly white student body. Kaprow's *Night* translated these fantasies into a formalist language of color, shape, and structural opposition, and reframed them with a pedagogical uncertainty about their status as art. While the happening used these techniques to elicit the students' self-conscious reflection, its engagement with race was ambivalent. *Night* may have defamiliarized student rituals, but Kaprow stopped short of a critique of whiteness, and in this way diverged from Michigan's nascent counterculture of civil rights activism.

Keywords

Allan Kaprow – primitivism – art pedagogy – happenings – college life – race – whiteness

1 Introduction

On a Saturday night in May 1961, about a dozen students at the University of Michigan gathered on the lawn in front of the School of Architecture and Design to experience what was advertised in the student newspaper as an

“open-house” and “exhibit” by the visiting artist Allan Kaprow (Axelrod, 1961). The space in front of the School featured an uncanny pedagogical landscape of architectural fragments arranged in chronological sequence.¹ In walking towards Kaprow’s nighttime “exhibit,” the students would have passed through a full-scale replica of an ancient Greek archway to arrive at a paradigmatically modernist building, with its simplified rectangles of glass and metal and dramatically extended “space frame” roof, which a 1954 cohort of students had built themselves with commercial sponsorship (Brinkman, 1977, p. 57). Air came through the open sides of the pavilion and light filtered through the intricately patterned roof.

Kaprow’s “exhibit” took place underneath this space frame structure and inside a tent-like enclosure he had instructed the students at Michigan to construct using a low-tech system of wires and pulleys (Figure 16.1). Comprised of ripped pieces of fabric and plastic sheeting, the draped enclosure was a loose approximation of a generically archaic or “primitive” dwelling. Crudely painted oil drums, tires, and wheel rims dangled precariously overhead, while bundles of uprooted saplings adorned the space’s permeable perimeter. Prior to the event itself, a hand-painted sign forbiddingly read “NO ADMITTANCE” and barred entry to the enclosure.

A group of student performers, who had been working with Kaprow over the past week to build the dwelling, ushered the student audience inside. At various moments throughout two roughly twenty-minute performances at 8:30 and at 9:30 p.m., a student perched in the rafters tugged on the ropes, cut pieces of wood with a power saw that fell loudly onto the oil drums, and set newspaper confetti aloft by means of a noisy electric fan. All of this, it is crucial to note, was heard more clearly than it was seen, since the nighttime performances were lit only dimly and inconsistently by a collection of flashlights, camera flash bulbs, and matches. In the final act, several students covered in crumpled paper and rags emerged from cardboard boxes and a tangle of saplings. With arms painted red, blue, and yellow, the student performers splashed pink and blue water at the audience through the plastic curtains in a mock assault.

This Ann Arbor happening—which Kaprow later titled *Night*—shared materials, actions, and the use of an enclosed audience with the better-known *A Spring Happening* (1961), which Kaprow had presented at the Reuben Gallery in New York one month earlier (Rodenbeck, 2011). Unlike *A Spring Happening*, however, *Night* was performed, experienced, and made by university students. In fact, it was the first such site-specific happening that Kaprow created on a university campus as a visiting professor, a practice he would develop throughout the 1960s while teaching art and art history at Rutgers University



FIGURE 16.1 Allan Kaprow, *Night*, 1961. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Irving Kaufman and students assemble the environment. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (980063). Artwork © Allan Kaprow Estate

(1953–1960) and Stony Brook (1960–1969). This chapter will focus on *Night*'s relationship to the modernist and formalist tendency towards "primitivism": the common, if troubling, practice in the modern west of constructing idealized fantasies of archaic and non-Western cultures to revivify and sometimes contest their own experiments with form and meaning.² In the 1950s art world, it typically involved visually appropriating and decontextualizing artworks and artifacts hailing from indigenous America, pre-classical Greece, Sub-Saharan Africa, Inuit peoples, China, Egypt, among other "exotic" locales and eras.³ This chapter analyzes the primitivist dimensions of *Night*—its decontextualizing and abstracting operations, its allusions to archaic structures and rituals—in two ways: first, as a critical intervention into midcentury college art pedagogy, and second, as a complex engagement with the primitivism of mainstream

student culture at Michigan, a land-grant university that was overwhelmingly white through the 1960s.

This argument is part of a larger one in my book, *Happening Pedagogy: Allan Kaprow's Experiments in Instruction* (Capper, in press), where I argue that pedagogy was central to the way Kaprow conceptualized the happening in the late 1950s into the 1960s. Kaprow created the happening by radicalizing the experimental tendencies of modernist pedagogy that he experienced in classes with three prominent teachers at midcentury: Hans Hofmann, Meyer Schapiro, and John Cage. In his happenings, Kaprow used pedagogy to manage distributed agency in participants, wield an informal sense of authority over his work, mix high and low discourses as well as elements of planning and improvisation, and draw on his students' own practices of vernacular performance, all while riffing on the philosophies of his past teachers. A key component of Kaprow's pedagogy—evident in *Night* as well as in other environments and happenings—was his desire to use the lessons of formalism to provoke an ambiguous and open-ended sense of social self-consciousness in his college student participants.

2 *Night* as Art History Lesson

In Risa Axelrod's preview of *Night* in the student newspaper, she relays a version of Kaprow's now-well known art historical justification for the happening as a revivifying extension of modern painting through what he had famously called "a return to the point where art was more actively involved in ritual, magic, and life than we have known it in our recent past" (Kaprow & Kelley, 1993, p. 7). This claim can be read as a typical case of modernist primitivism, where the artist appropriates a mix of archaic or non-Western forms, understood as more immediate and collective, to ameliorate the alienation caused by capitalist-industrial modernity. In the context of midcentury art history pedagogy, Kaprow's embrace of archaic and non-western forms had its progressive side. As a professor at Rutgers and Stony Brook, Kaprow had long argued that non-Western art should be given a central place in a non-teleological art history survey, and was repeatedly censured for this by his faculty colleagues and administrators.⁴ In this light, Kaprow's counter-appropriation of the modern space frame roof for his apparently "primitive" happening can be read as transgressive, which is to say as a polemical corrective to Michigan's Eurocentric art history lesson that positioned the Greek column as the origin point of architectural rationality.

Still, Kaprow's use of generic hallmarks of "primitive" creativity, such as weaving, bricolage, and body painting, did not seek to produce full contextual or historical understanding in students. Rather, they were mined for their affective charge and taught through a formalist lens. In this way, *Night* both parallels and exaggerates the formalism of the anthropologists he read on the topic of "primitive art," such as Franz Boas and Claude Lévi-Strauss.⁵ Consider one of Kaprow's teaching notes for *Night*, which he sent in his letter to Kaufman. Here Kaprow instructs his student collaborators to use a "*naturally casual*" style in painting the environment's cloth drapery; and with respect to the sewing, tying, and spacing of the drapery, he advises: "Be *sloppy* but avoid repetitions of sloppiness" (Kaprow, 1961, May 7). Thus, in a characteristically paradoxical pedagogical gesture, Kaprow makes students highly conscious of formal polarities, such as repetition versus variation, in order to elicit from them the correct form of "sloppiness" or informality, a quality we typically associate with a lack of self-consciousness. As evidenced by the photographs that document the production of *Night*, the students painted the cloth strips in informal, yet highly individual and contrasting styles, ranging from broad linear gestures to intricate curlicue forms surrounded by hearts.

In another instruction, Kaprow draws students' attention to the formal properties of the car rims and barrels, whose circularity is contrasted with what he calls the "longish iron junk" strung up nearby. Kaprow stresses sonic form equally. As if he were composing an immersive percussion work using readymade instruments for Cage's experimental composition class (which Kaprow attended from 1957–1959), Kaprow's instructions were physically and logistically demanding.⁶ He directed students to hang "11 varied sized iron barrels ... 3 car wheel rims and eight pieces of longish iron junk. Check each of these for sound when struck to get a variety. Hang these at random over the area" (Kaprow, 1961, May 7). Despite Kaprow's use of the term "random," there was again a pronounced formalism at work: the assignment presupposed a numerical symmetry between eleven barrels and eleven other metal things (car wheel rims and iron pieces). And classifying objects in the manner Cage proposed for tape compositions, Kaprow assigned three classes of material (barrels, tires, pipes) with differentiated geometric shapes and equally distinctive audible tones. Having sourced, tested, and hung these large objects, the students were then primed to explore Hofmann-like formal oppositions by discussing, in Kaprow's words, "structural archetypes such as symmetry and asymmetry, central accents and eccentric ones, random order and determined order, repetition or alloverness, and so forth" (Kaprow, 1964, p. 138).

Night's temporality exemplified a paradoxical lesson about the ontology of art: while the happening was an exercise structured by formalist conceits, its performance as an event needed to be dynamic, mysterious, and even anxiety producing. This lesson reflected Kaprow's conception of the "metaphysics" of experimental art in the early 1960s. On the one hand, Kaprow, the avant-garde artist and teacher, was critical of any old-fashioned aesthetic mysticism focused on the conservative veneration of art. At the same time, he found the Bauhaus-derived efforts at demystification via visual training, which were dominant in university art and architecture departments at the time, to be too affirmative and rule-driven.⁷ Similarly, in his pedagogical essays, Kaprow warned that exercises exploring the possibilities of abstract organization were not sufficient for teaching students to recognize art's distinctive metaphysical character, a metaphysics he similarly insisted on in his pamphlet for *Words* (1962) as a kind of ephemerality and indeterminacy, when he created that environment in the Stony Brook dormitory.⁸ He writes: "the nature of art cannot be fixed—a common-sense judgment that can *easily* be separated from the mystique of holiness that also accompanies this period [of modernism]" (Kaprow, 1965). Here, Kaprow makes a distinction between a conservative mystification of art, which he rejects as ideological, and his own theory of the artwork's temporally extended, but accessible ineffability, which he derived from his study of dynamic formalism and "discoordination" in Schapiro's art history classroom.⁹

Night exhibited a populist metaphysics of art through a pedagogy that sustained a high affective temperature, one that Kaprow associated with a return to a premodern rootedness of aesthetics in "magic, ritual and life" (Kaprow & Kelley, 1993, p. 7). In writing to Kaufman about *Night*, Kaprow claimed similarly: "This is a gamble for all of us. It can work out great but it can also be a great and dismal failure. Everyone [...] should be aware of this [...] it'll make for that nice anxiety!" (Kaprow, 1961, May 7). Indeed, in *Night*, Kaprow sought to stoke that "nice anxiety" with instructions that were both demanding and loose. For example, he wrote to Kaufman that the time limit of one week that his students had to construct the environment and prepare for the performance was ideal; students had precisely enough time to "reflect on their roles," but not enough to rehearse or relax.

In this way, Kaprow saw modernist autonomy and ephemerality operating in tandem; in his view, anxiety and uncertainty facilitated the student's grasp of the magical aspect of modernist creativity. In *Night*, this approach is palpable even in the formal assignment for the sound installation of hung objects. Schapiro had taught that "We live more in the horizontal dimension than the

vertical [...] and we are not surprised to learn that the same line looks shorter when horizontal than when vertical" (Schapiro, 1972, p. 15). That is, if horizontal arrangements appear more natural in that they yield to gravity, vertical forms, in fighting gravity, are effortful constructions that intrinsically raise the question of their own precarity. *Night* similarly developed a phenomenological sense of energy and anxiety through its formal design: Kaprow's instructions asked students to hang heavy objects from the roof "just above head level (7 ½ feet)," in threatening proximity to the audience.¹⁰

3 *Night* as College Initiation Ritual

In the preview of *Night* in the student newspaper Kaprow likens it to what he calls a "springtime" event (Axelrod, 1961, p. 5), an angle that was symptomatic of Kaprow's anthropological fascination with the persistence of archaic beliefs and rituals in modern society. In this way, Kaprow's *Night* invited Michigan students to see their participation in critical relation to the numerous student-run happenings scheduled for earlier that semester, namely the events associated with *Spring Weekend*, which took place just a week before the students started work on Kaprow's *Night*. Indeed, for college students in the early 1960s and especially in a midwestern climate, the last few weeks of the school year could become genuinely intense, as elaborate rituals of openair celebration and memorialization overtook the daily grind of studying. Described by the *Michiganensian* yearbook as a series of riotous competitions between housing units, Spring Weekend included "a beauty contest and house building contest" (Harvey, 1961, p. 365). As documented in the yearbook, dozens of students mobilized to erect giant decorations of dubious refinement using old newspaper and glue. There was also programming overlap between campus ritual and happenings that covered the full range of aesthetic production; *Night* was technically commissioned by students as part of their annual Festival of the Creative Arts, which included everything from an interfraternity sing to a commodity-centric Foreign Auto Show (Anonymous, 1961).

Considered within the stream of springtime student-sponsored events, the haunted house qualities of *Night* come to the fore. The creaky pulleys, the chainsaw, the unidentifiable loud noises, the shadows and flickering light that Kaprow explicitly compared to that of a "Jack-o-lantern" in his letter to Kaufman, each could be said to call up this vernacular tradition of environmental performance art but then abstract it through formal contrasts in tone and frequent periods of silence. This is especially evident in an audio recording that Kaprow made at Michigan inside the environment for *Night*.¹¹ The sounds

on the tape, indexical though they are, have been deliberately arranged in the manner of *Musique Concrète*, a genre Kaprow had experimented with since the late 1950s. And it is possible that Kaprow played this tape of the environment of *Night* during subsequent performances of *Night*, a strategy of layering he used repeatedly in his prior environments. Here, such nonsynchronous amplification would have further abstracted the almost clichéd sound effects of the happening, such as the “thunder” likely produced by shaking a metal sheet.

Kaprow relished all the ambiguities and cross-references here; his campus happenings deliberately mimicked the aesthetics of different student productions to appeal to the students he taught. After all, this was also a practical requirement for the experiment to take place: he had to inspire their interest to successfully recruit unpaid student collaborators for extracurricular happenings. Kaprow acknowledged as much in a 1961 College Art Association (CAA) presentation, where he wryly proposed to pay his students “in proportion to how much of their bodies and minds were appropriated for his success”.¹² Once such a pedagogical linkage with the students was in motion, Kaprow could defamiliarize student culture by scrambling more particular codes that regulated its forms of play. Take, for example, the five student performers who emerged beneath cartons placed within the soft enclosure in *Night*. Kaprow had instructed these students to make their own costumes by sewing crumpled paper and rags onto leotards or long underwear in what appear to be variations on the layered form of a pinecone, an upside-down tree, or a pile of leaves. In the teaching notes he sent to Kaufman, Kaprow elaborates as follows:

The idea is to have each person look like *a pile of junk not a spook* [emphasis Kaprow's]. For the purpose of the right attitude, I'd convey this fact to the performers early enough to have them think about it. ... The power of such spectres therefore will be felt only if they're ambiguous in their role, i.e. human being or junk pile, witch-doctor or spirit, fact or fantasy, art or life, etc., etc., etc. (Kaprow, 1961, May 7)

By invoking the term “spook,” even while disavowing it so forcefully (*not a spook*), Kaprow tips the scales in favor of the haunted house referent and lends support to the possibility that Ann Arbor students experienced *Night* in this way. But as Kaprow makes clear in this quote, *Night* asked for murkier and less reified actions than the typical haunted house. Covered not only in rags but also in the art studio staples of paint and paper, five student performers would ideally shimmer with an unstable identity shifting between metaphysical resonance (as in “witch-doctor or spirit”), plain facticity (a “human being or junk pile”), and a pedagogical demonstration of ontological

questions (“fact or fantasy, art or life”). Equally important, Kaprow insists that the student performers “think” about themselves as a contingent bundle of shifting signifiers.

Kaprow’s campus happenings referenced the primitivism of student rituals, but his use of formalism and the philosophical lessons of modernist pedagogy repositioned these rituals in a way that made them ineffective at enforcing social norms. Thus, in abstracting haunted houses and carnival floats in *Night*, Kaprow led students through a modernist process of defamiliarization. On one level this served a formalist pedagogical purpose—to teach them about the possibilities of form and structure. But the defamiliarizing process had another pedagogical purpose in this context, one that had more to do with social value and self-awareness. For, beneath Kaprow’s abstraction of the college carnivalesque, weighty social questions were already under negotiation among students. If collective compositions of oversize paper mâché balls seemed relatively innocent, many student rituals at Michigan during the early 1960s were socially repressive. A student-built haunted house or carnival event may appear to be a playful, creative, and presumably inclusive tradition, but others—for instance, initiation rituals associated with hazing—were routinely exclusionary and humiliating, reflecting a darker kind of vernacular primitivism that evoked the premodern and the archaic, not as a critique of Western aesthetics, but as an indulgence towards the traditional maintenance of social hierarchy (Styrett, 2009).

In the *Michiganensian*, snapshots of these varied traditions bleed together, and acknowledging this continuum from the utopian to the disciplinary in the pages of the yearbook reveals more depth in Kaprow’s attempts to provoke self-consciousness in student participants (Sheldon, 1969, p. 180). For instance, it is with a cheerful tone of habituation that the 1961 *Michiganensian* documented a springtime initiation ritual of the honorary society of the College of Engineering. The yearbook tells us that this society calls its distinguished engineering students “Vulcans,” ostensibly in honor of the Roman god of fire and blacksmithing. But the photographs themselves allude to far more disturbing rituals, namely the racist tradition of blackface in the form of a torchlight procession (Figure 16.2). There are no women or African-American members of the engineering society that we can see in the photographs, even though Michigan first admitted an African-American student in 1853. The yearbook caption tells us that the “blackened” men are chained together, in an evocation of a chain gang and the history of US slavery. Such blackface spectacle presupposes our recognition that these are white student bodies and that what we are seeing is thus a pernicious white fantasy of inhabiting, as an adventure, black subjugation.¹³

We might also briefly consider another initiation ritual in Michigan, this one created and performed by male athletes belonging to the so-called “Sphinx” honorary society. “Painted with red brick dust” (in the words of the yearbook),

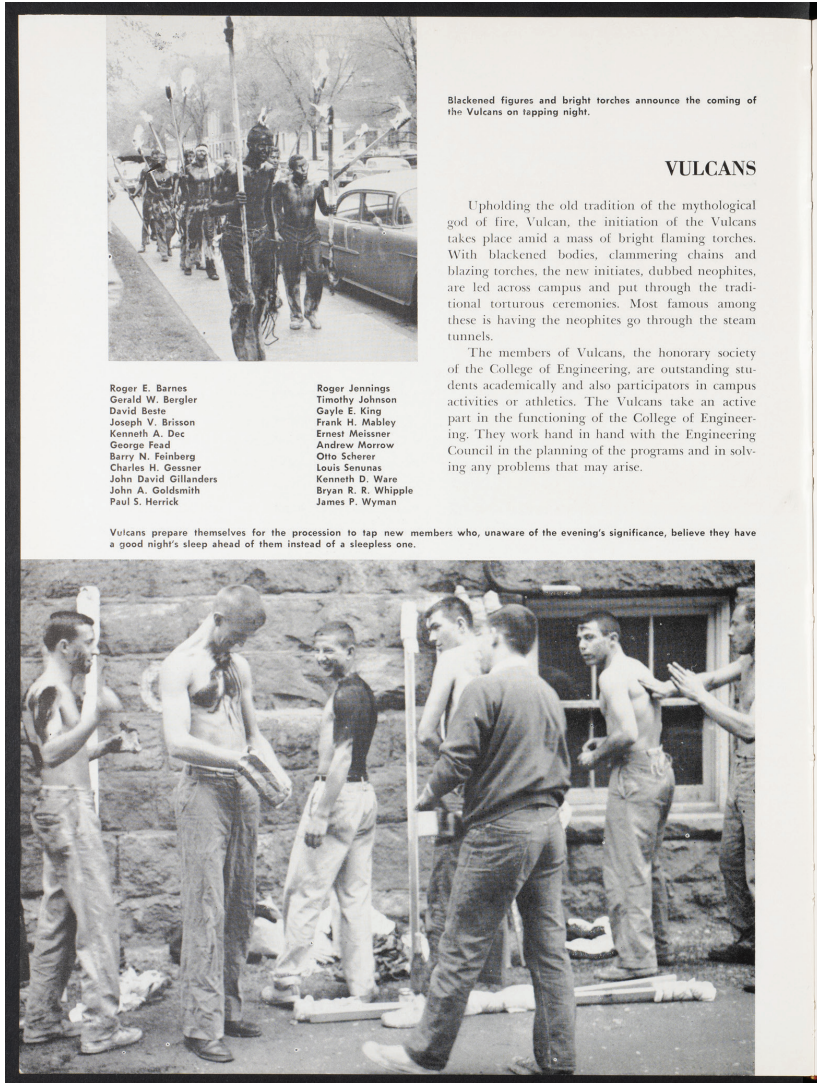


FIGURE 16.2 The initiation ritual of the ‘Vulcans’ engineering society, as featured in the 1961 *Michiganensian* yearbook (p. 396). The photograph provides a stark visual record of how racist campus traditions, such as the use of blackface in this torchlight procession, were normalized. (Courtesy of the Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan)

these students used ordinary bath towels and exaggerated gestures of supplication to transform the everyday library fountain into what they positioned as an exotic locale: the Nile River (Harvey, 1961, p. 398). The photographs tell us little about how the so-called “neophytes” experienced their participation in the springtime ritual (since they’re blindfolded and face-down), but the spectators, we are told, “enjoy the happenings.”

As we recall, Kaprow’s *Night* featured student performers lighting matches, swinging flashlights, and painting their skin the primary colors red, blue, and yellow. By comparison with the Vulcan and Sphinx student rituals, in Kaprow’s formalist imagination, it may be that the primary colors were more likely to readily index both modernist painting and athletic “school spirit” with the more overt racial coding of face painting alive only as a secondary association. But a primitivist replay of racial stereotypes was something that Kaprow also seemed to perceive as a risk inherent to *Night*. Though he told Kaufman that the performers should not look like “a spook,” one should note that this word had a double-meaning in the early 1960s: while it had long functioned as a lighthearted synonym for “ghost,” in the U.S. at midcentury, it also circulated as a derogatory term for African Americans” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). Kaprow similarly marked the anthropological primitivism of *Night* as a danger in another passage in his letter to Kaufman: “I don’t think it’d be a good idea to have [students] conceive their role as a voodoo ritual. This is a cliché and is overdone in modern dance” (Kaprow, 1961, May 7). Here he describes his pedagogical strategy to Kaufman with precision: he wanted to walk right up to a stereotype, not to simply repeat it, but to evoke it in a way that disarmed it of its usual social value.

Thus, while Kaprow undoubtedly mined the primitivism of student ritual for its sense of danger and affective charge, his pedagogy sought to deflate its clichéd and socially harmful referentiality—substituting a puny match for an imposing flaming torch or lecturing about aesthetic form to the point where the aura of a regressive fantasy lost its magic. On this view, we might say that the student engineers’ torchlight procession indexes a white supremacy that *Night*’s painted students could defamiliarize and render less semiotically effective. The happening fragmented, abstracted, and recombined racialized motifs from student initiation rituals into a concentrated 20-minute experience that was at once more alarming and more indeterminate. Any conclusions over what *Night*’s critique was—or if there even was one—remain open-ended.

In this way, Kaprow’s experimental pedagogy marked its distance from the pedagogical efforts of the nascent New Left counterculture, whose famous manifesto, *The Port Huron Statement*, was first drafted by a University of

Michigan undergraduate, Tom Hayden, precisely around the time his peers were collaborating with Kaprow on campus (Students for a Democratic Society, 1964).¹⁴ As *The Port Huron Statement* had it, indeterminacy was a generational *problem*—a new generation of aimless middle-class white students needed to become aware of their detachment from democratic participation. Hayden and his compatriots advocated for “the Southern struggle against racial bigotry” among other pressing social inequities (Students for a Democratic Society, 1964, p. 3). No praxis so concrete is suggested by Kaprow, who we know was sympathetic to the Civil Rights movement but not directly involved in protest actions.

Kaprow’s philosophical commitment to pedagogy as a medium for happenings meant that student rituals were integral inspirations for his work; indeed, Kaprow regarded some student rituals and pranks as a kind of vernacular experimentalism. He liked that student participants might be semi-skilled, or need to be deskilled, or be partially aware of the possibility of the happening being an instance of the work of art. In this context, *Night’s* modernist primitivism was far from a simple idealization and decontextualization of an imagined past. Through its use of an exaggerated formalism, and its deletion of some of the more insidious symbolism of springtime campus rituals, the happening revealed current campus practices to have weight as ideological fantasies. Though Kaprow adamantly never sought to intervene in students’ primitivist fantasies in a didactic way—say, by instructing them to stop reproducing harmful stereotypes—he nonetheless transformed their nascent experimentalism into an ambiguously critical pedagogy.

Acknowledgement

This chapter is adapted from Emily Ruth Capper, *Happening Pedagogy: Allan Kaprow’s Experiments in Instruction*, forthcoming from The University of Chicago Press in 2026. © 2026 by The University of Chicago.

Notes

- 1 My description of *Night* draws on the numerous documentary photographs of students building the environment, as well as detailed instructions, diagrams, and a “synopsis” that Kaprow sent to Irving Kaufman, professor of art education at Michigan. Kaprow asked Kaufman to get the students started with the building a few days before Kaprow himself arrived on campus to take up this pedagogical role. See Kaprow, A. (1961, May 7). [Letter to

- Irving Kaufman]. Allan Kaprow papers (Accession no. 980063, Box 6, Folder 8). The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA, United States.
- 2 For an insightful overview of the history and historiography of “primitivism” from the 1930s to the present, see Etherington and Spinner (2024).
 - 3 Michael Leja has shown that Abstract Expressionist painters distanced their abstract canvases from what they denigrated as mere design by connecting their work to a carefully constructed canon of decontextualized “archaic” and “primitive” art. Leja (1993, p. 69).
 - 4 Kaprow, A. (1955, March 10). [Letter to Mason Gross]. Office of the President (Mason W. Gross), Faculty Correspondence (Box 42, Folder 19). Rutgers University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers, NJ, United States.
 - 5 We know that Kaprow read the foundational texts of modern anthropology, including Boas (1955).
 - 6 No official record of enrollment at the New School in this period has survived, but several interviews have established that Kaprow took the course multiple times between 1957 and 1959. See, for example, Jacobs (1999, p. 97). On Cage’s pedagogy at the New School, see Capper (in press).
 - 7 Kaprow criticized what he saw as “the bland, utopian ethics” of Bauhaus-derived visual education, which he claimed doubles as “group therapy” in a paper he delivered at Penn State University. See Kaprow, A. (1965). The creation of art and the creation of art education [Conference paper]. Allan Kaprow papers (Accession no. 980063, Box 47, Folder 3). The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA, United States. Perhaps inspired by Kaprow, Kaufman made a similar claim in *Art and Education in Contemporary Culture*, arguing that progressive art education must ask students “to face pain and frustration as well as joy and achievement,” see Kaufman (1966, p. 77).
 - 8 Kaprow, A. (1962). *Words* [Booklet]. Allan Kaprow papers (Accession no. 980063, Box 7, Folder 5). The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA, United States.
 - 9 Schapiro first introduced a key term for his thinking about form in both medieval and modern art—“discoordination”—in his 1939 essay on the Romanesque abbey church of Souillac. A discoordinated composition sets up, or “implies,” correspondences between “parts, relations, or properties” and then actively “negates” them. Upon closer and longer inspection, the first negation conceals or distracts from a whole set of subtler, even mysterious, correspondences within the composition. Schapiro (2006).
 - 10 Carolee Schneemann has stated that what she remembered most about participating in Kaprow’s happenings was the sense that something might fall, see Schneemann, C. (2008, December 7). [Discussion at the University of Chicago].
 - 11 Kaprow, A. (1961). *Ann Arbor* [Sound tape reel]. Allan Kaprow Papers (Accession no. 980063, Box 83, R22). The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA, United States.
 - 12 Kaprow, A. (1961). [Typed page taped into College Art Association of America Program, Annual Meetings, January 26, 27, 28, 1961, Minneapolis, Minnesota]. Allan Kaprow papers (Accession no. 980063, Box 61, Folder 16). The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA, United States.
 - 13 For an overview of the history of blackface minstrelsy as “a practice at once potent and slippery,” including within white fraternities, see Cole and Davis (2013), Johnson (2012).
 - 14 As the Introductory Note indicates, the statement was first drafted by Tom Hayden in 1961 and collectively elaborated during the founding Convention of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), held in Port Huron, Michigan, June 11–15, 1962. SDS was a national organization of leftwing students active during the 1960s in the United States. For a classic history of the New Left, see Miller (1994).

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