



Andy Warhol, Fluxus Oligarch

**An Art Investigation**

# **THE MAIL ART CONTINUUM PROJECT**

**Published by Crevisist Institute**

This page is  
intentionally  
not a blanket.



# The Mail Art Continuum Survey

Commissioned by The Crevicist Institute

January 2024

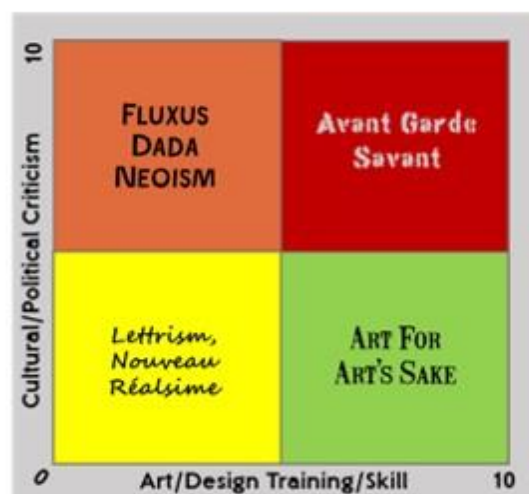
## Introduction.

Upon our awakening from a quarter-century slumber away from Mail Art, an old friend said “it will be interesting to see what you think about *today's* mail artists.” This was ominous. Indeed, it appeared that the anchor tenets – Dada, Futurism, Fluxus, Neoism, et al - of early/mid mail art are fading away. To test this hypothesis, a “Mail Art Continuum” for use in a survey of mail artists was created. This paper outlines this research project, its findings and conclusions.

## Survey Instrument.

After researching avant-garde art movements across the last century, we constructed a two-by-two grid comprising four styles of mail art, with the x-axis the level of formal art training and the y-axis the degree of embedded cultural and political criticism. The quadrants were labeled with primary art movements represented within the space.

THE MAIL ART CONTINUUM



## Survey Deployment.

A printed Mail Art Continuum was sent via mail art packages from Nonlocal Variable to 127 mail artists, with clear directions to select their working artistic style on the continuum. The sample population was comprised of individuals who reconnected from 1990 or earlier (21%) or new correspondents met in 2023 (7%). 38 survey responses were returned (29%). 10 (27%) respondents have been participating in Mail Art since the 1980s or earlier. The margin of error is +/- 7% given the small sample size.

### THE MAIL ART CONTINUUM



Mail Art may not have judges, but it has underlying styles and values, from pure art to cultural revolutionary manifestoes.

Make your mark. Place a dot ● on this grid that represents your style and return it to **nonlocal** in your next send. Results will be posted on [iuoma](http://iuoma.com) and [nonlocalvariable.art](http://nonlocalvariable.art) on 31 December 2023.

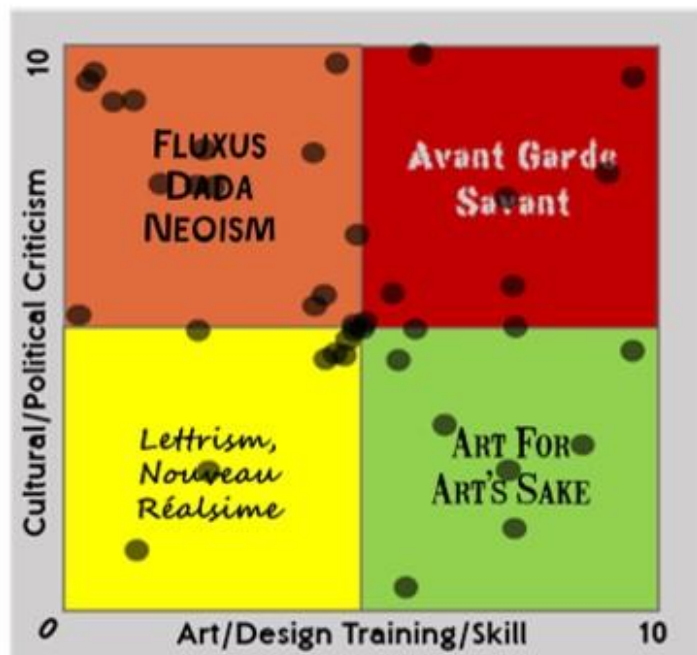


COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THIS CARD FAR AND WIDE.  
2945 NW 153<sup>RD</sup> AVE/BEAVERTON, OR 97006-5311 USA

## Statistical Analysis.

### Primary Responses

This scattergram shows all of the dot placements within the continuum quadrants from mail artists returning the survey instrument.





The response scattergram shows a broad distribution of these mail artists' self-reported styles. Note that there is a dense cluster in the center of the chart; many respondents placed their dot on the center of the continuum. We do not if this is a signal that they use all styles, indecisive, indifferent or just being difficult. Notably, only 30 of the 37 respondents placed their answer within the quadrants; the other 7 colored outside box.

### Quadrant selections

The chart below shows how many people placed their dots on the continuum, and the percentages of choice of each quadrant. The seven "outliers" are not included.



The Fluxus choice is clearly the most referenced choice. Also, the right (trained artists) quadrants account for fewer than the left (non-artists) responses. We also now see that there are far more dots than the 37 respondents, a total of 60 'dots' including the outlier returns.

### Excessive choices

To understand why there are over 1.5 dots per respondent, the following grid shows how many dots were placed by how many people.

#### DOT DISOBEDIENCE

	people	percent
0 dots	1	2%
1 dot	19	49%
2 dots	2	5%
3 dots	2	5%
4 dots	6	16%
pranksters	7	19%

Only *half* of the respondents placed only one dot on the continuum, 10% placed two or three dots, and 16% placed dots on all quadrants. And one 1 of 4 provided their responses outside of the continuum grid. One person simply sent the survey back with the continuum left *blank*. This his is all very disturbing, and essentially invalidates the entire project. These people are clearly unable to follow directions. They cannot make a simple choice, and in some cases just scribble detritus on the paper.

### Prankster responses.

Here are samples of the “outlier / prankster” responses received.

Ruggero Maggi



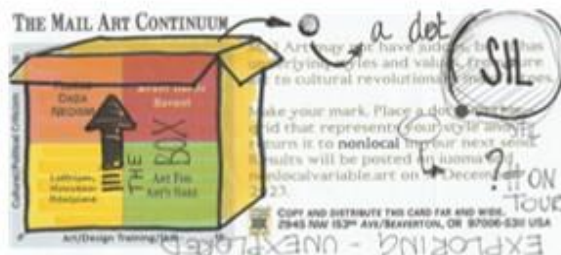
Alan Brignull



Neosho



Sil Dubois



## Findings.

After the preceding quantitative assessment, seeking to answer a major question ("Is Fluxus gone?"), here are our 3 conclusions.

### 1. FLUXUS IS DEFINITELY NOT DEAD.

The anarchistic responses to the survey reinforces the all-over-the-place playfulness and 'no rules' behavior is still going. We are still a playful crowd, newbies too.



### B. RESEARCH IS FUTILE.

It is impossible to deliver rigorous research or add to academic knowledge about the Mail Art milieu. If given a mail artist a multiple-choice question, the answer is "Yes!" or "Bunny." or "Whoop whoop."

### 3. REJECT THE LABELS.

It is clear that these people, with their art manifestos and inability to sit in one place for very long, do not like labels. Now that I think about it, neither do I. This is about people sharing in community. Not a set of 4 boxes.

## End notes.

Seriously, thanks to all who sent back their thinking about these questions about the many ways mail art is practiced and revealed. It was cool and fun to see the diversity in our community. And of course the continuum survey was a bit of an overly contrived, - a wink and a nod - in the first place, hoping to give folks a bit of fun.



The background of the page is a collage of various mail art cards and a central orange abstract drawing. The cards are scattered around the central text, some tilted and some straight. The central drawing is a complex, orange-colored abstract shape made of interconnected loops and lines. The cards themselves are colorful and feature various text and graphics, including the title 'The Mail Art Cookbook' and various sections like 'Introduction', 'Ingredients', and 'Recipes'.

## Participants

Many thanks to mail art friends who took the time to deliver a thoughtful, creative response to this survey call. It was nice to see these in the mail throughout late 2023.

Darlene Artschul

Hanna Bayer

Diane Bertrand

Alan Brignull

Jimmy Connors

Thom Courcelle

Mike Dickau

Mike Dyar

Fluxus Translation Comm.

frips

Claudia Garcia

Elke Grundmann

John Held, Jr.

Boog Highberger

Torill Elisabeth Larsen

Michael Leigh

Ruggero Maggi

Mailart Martha

Katerina Nikoltsou (MomKat)

Mike Mosher

Neosho

Jürgen Olbrich

PJM

Sarah Roe

Sil Dubois

Rod Summers

Alan Turner

D.A. Ward

Chuck Welch

Oscar Yeats

...and several unknown mail artists due to forgetting to jot their names on the survey....



**nonlocal variable**

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Beaverton, Oregon  
97006-5311 USA



It's over.  
Go home.

-Bueller



When there's nothing else to do, do the residue



DEFUND WAR.  
DEMAND PEACE.

CREVICISM  
PRESS

this mail art came from my body.