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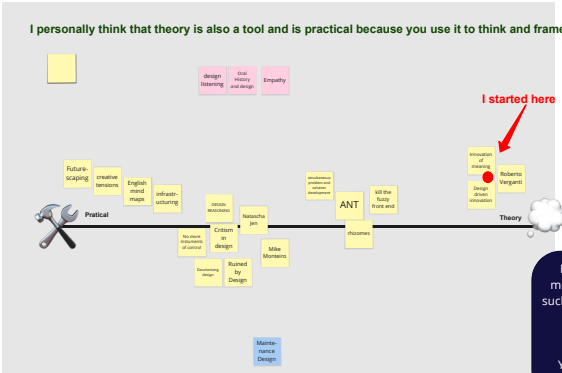
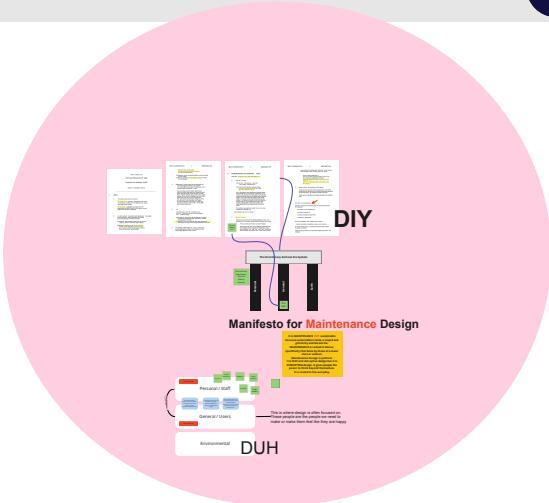



How can I change the meaning of something in such a short period of time?

You don't.

You create a space for meaning to change.



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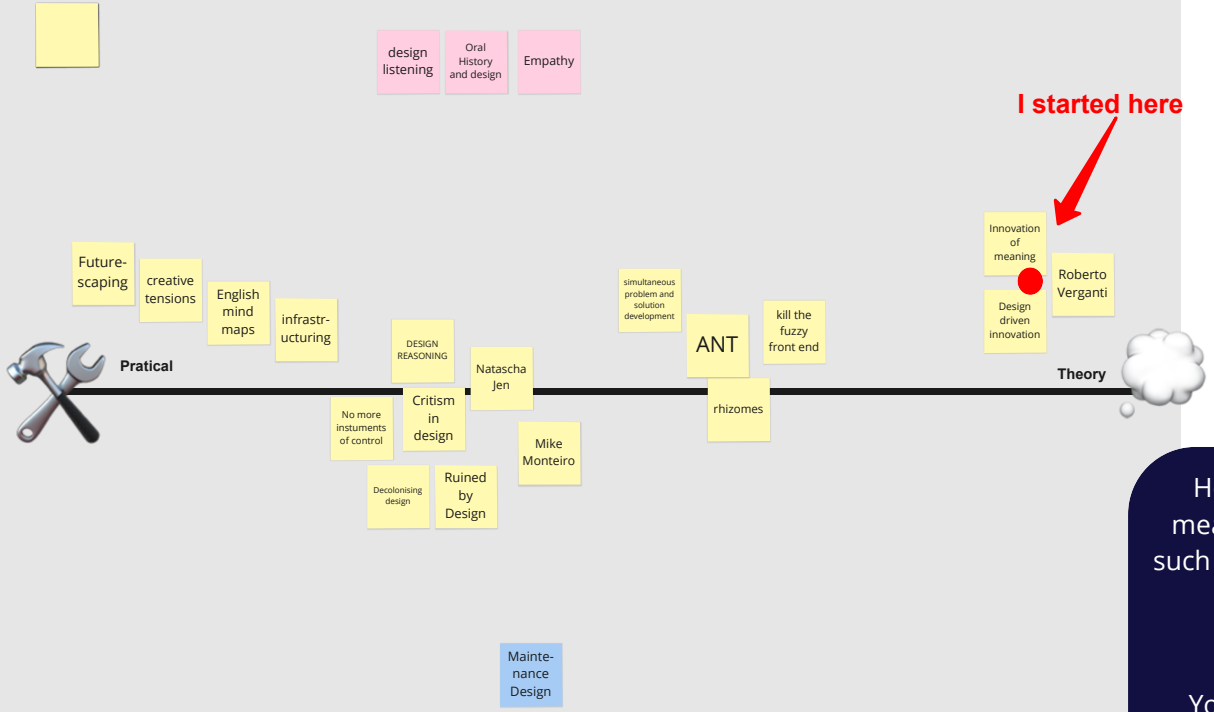


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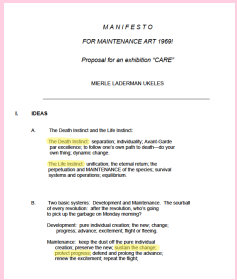


MANIFESTO

FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969!

Proposal for an exhibition "CARE"

MERLE LADERMAN UKELES

I. IDEAS

A. The Death Instinct and the Life Instinct:

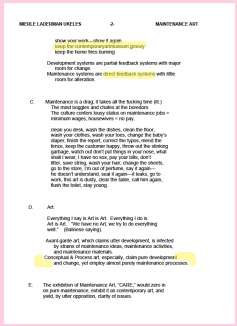
The Death Instinct: separation, individuality, Avant-Garde par excellence, to follow one's own path to death—do your own thing, dynamic change

The Life Instinct: unification, the eternal return, the perpetuation and MAINTENANCE of the species, survival systems and operations, equilibrium.

B. Two basic systems: Development and Maintenance: The sourball of every revolution: after the revolution, who's going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?

Development: pure individual creation; the new; change; progress; advance; excitement; flight or fleeing

Maintenance: keep the dust off the pure individual creation; preserve the new; sustain the change; resist progress; defend and protect the advance; renew the excitement; repeat the flight.



MERLE LADERMAN UKELES -2- MAINTENANCE ART

show your work—show it again
keep the home fires burning

Development systems are partial feedback systems with major room for change
Maintenance systems are direct feedback systems with little room for alteration.

C. Maintenance is a drag: it takes all the fucking time (lit.)
The mind boggles and cloaks at the boredom.
The culture confers lousy status on maintenance jobs – minimum wages, housewives – no pay.

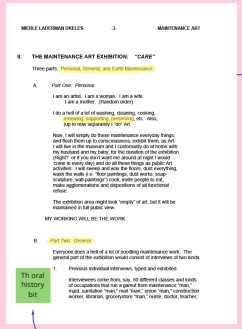
Finish one dirty thing, wash the dishes, clean the floor, wash your clothes, wash your toes, change the baby's diaper, finish the report, correct the typos, mend the fence, keep the customer happy, throw out the stinking garbage, watch out don't put things in your nose, what a life! Keep the body clean, keep the air clean, filter, save string, wash your hair, change the sheets, go to the store, I'm out of perfume, say it again— he doesn't understand, seal it again—it leaks, go to work, this art is dusty, clear the table, call him again, flush the toilet, stay young.

D. Art:

Everything I say is Art is Art. Everything I do is Art is Art. "We have no Art, we try to do everything well." (Kallmeier saying).

Avant-garde art, which claims utter development, is infected by strains of maintenance ideas, maintenance activities, and maintenance materials.
Conceptual & Process art, especially, claim pure development and change, yet employ almost purely maintenance processes.

E. The exhibition of Maintenance Art, "CARE," would zero in on pure maintenance, exhibit it as contemporary art, and yield, by utter opposition, clarity of issues.



MERLE LADERMAN UKELES -3- MAINTENANCE ART

II. THE MAINTENANCE ART EXHIBITION: "CARE"

Three parts: Personal, General, and Earth Maintenance

A. *Part One: Personal*

I am an artist. I am a woman. I am a wife.
I am a mother. (Random order).

I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, ironing, supporting, preserving, etc. Aka, (up to now separately ! "is" Art.

Now, I will simply do these maintenance everyday things, and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them, as Art. I will live in the museum and I customarily do at home with my husband and my baby, for the duration of the exhibition. (Mon. 10 A.M. to Fri. 5 P.M.) I will wash the floor, as I do at home in every city) and do all these things as public Art activities: I will sweep and wax the floors, dust everything, wash the walls (i.e. floor paintings, dust works, soap-sculpture, wall-paintings") cook, invite people to eat, prepare supplementations and dispositions of all functional relics.

The exhibition area might look "empty" of art, but it will be maintained in full public view.

MY WORKING WILL BE THE WORK

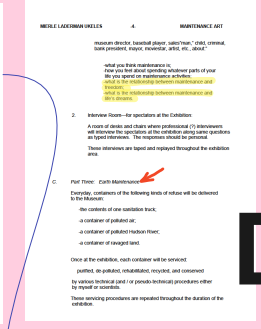
B. *Part Two: General*

Everyone does a hell of a lot of noodling maintenance work. The general part of the exhibition would consist of interviews of two kinds.

1. Previous individual interviews, typed and exhibited.

Interviewees come from, say, 50 different classes and kinds of occupations that run a gamut from maintenance "man," maid, sanitation "man," mail "man," union "man," construction worker, librarian, grocery/store "man," nurse, doctor, teacher,

Th oral history bit



MERLE LADERMAN UKELES -4- MAINTENANCE ART

museum director, baseball player, sales"man," child, criminal, bank president, mayor, inventor, artist, etc., about."

- what you think maintenance is;
- how you feel about spending whatever parts of your life you spend on maintenance activities;
- what is the relationship between maintenance and Art;
- what is the relationship between maintenance and life's dreams.

2. Interview Rooms—for spectators at the Exhibition:

A room of desks and chairs where professional (?) interviewers will interview the spectators at the exhibition using same questions as typed interviews. The responses should be personal.

These interviews are taped and replayed throughout the exhibition area.

C. *Part Three: Earth Maintenance*

Everyday, containers of the following kinds of refuse will be delivered to the Museum:

-the contents of one sanitation truck;

-a container of polluted air;

-a container of polluted Hudson River;

-a container of ravaged land.

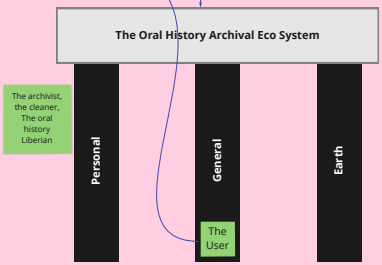
Once at the exhibition, each container will be serviced:

purified, de-polluted, rehabilitated, recycled, and conserved

by various technical (and / or pseudo-technical) procedures either by myself or scientists.

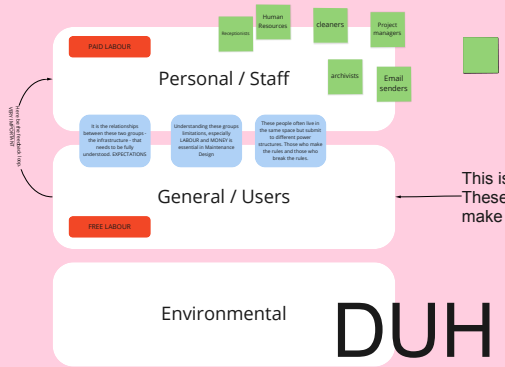
These servicing procedures are repeated throughout the duration of the exhibition.

DIY




# Manifesto for Maintenance Design

**It is MAINTENANCE NOT sustainable because sustainable is lame a stupid and gimmicky and bla bla bla.**
**MAINTENANCE is rooted in labour, specifically that done by those of a lower class or women.**
**Maintenance Design is political.**
**It is NOT anti disruptive design but it is DISRUPTING design. It gives people the power to think beyond themselves.**
**It is rooted in the everyday.**




DUH

This is where design is often focused on.
These people are the people we need to make or make them feel like they are happy