6 Daniel Spoerri's logic of the multiple and the continuum of active matter

Josephine Ellis

Prelude: a paradox of preservation

In a short essay first published in 1967, the distinguished art critic John Berger noted a paradox inherent in the preservation of artists' multiples. "It [the multiple]," Berger argued, "does not even have a proper state in which it can be preserved: it is constantly open to change and alteration. Like a toy it wears out."[1] Importantly, Berger wrote with a particular kind of multiple in mind: those designed to move by means of the "optical or mechanical, planned or haphazard."[2] For Berger, such multiples seemed to expose the limitations of conservation practice, at least as conservation has traditionally—if all too narrowly—been understood: that is, as primarily a form of "mimeographic labor," or the effort of keeping artworks "the same."[3] Taking up Berger's line of thought, this chapter aims to unpack the following questions: If an artwork is characterized by an innate propensity to transform, how might its "proper" state of preservation be identified—if, indeed, such a state can be said to exist at all? If the notion of an artwork's proper state departs from an ideal of material stasis, what conceptual shifts might follow if conservation departed instead from a condition of transformation? And what does it mean for an artwork to transform, particularly in light of what Peter Miller has recently described as the "pervasive activity of matter"?[4]

Viewed in the context of contemporary art conservation discourses, Berger's brief foray into preservation strikes a prescient thematic chord with recent theoretical approaches accounting for artworks since the 1960s that recur in multiple "equally genuine instances," as put by Brian Castriota (quoting the philosopher Nelson Goodman).[5] Drawing on analytic philosophy and philosophies of music in particular, these approaches expose the outmoded assumptions of traditional conservation thinking centered on the privileging of material fixity and stasis, in particular the assumption that artworks are anchored in, and therefore should be preserved as, a singular moment in time. The persistence of time-based media installations has provided a compelling case in point: an installation's so-called work-defining properties are often subject to reinterpretation and negotiation with each exhibition.[6] These dynamics demonstrate the fundamentally interpretive and contingent nature of conservation decisions, affirming Vivian van Saaze's observation that the "proper" state of artworks is not an intrinsic condition but one

DOI: 10.4324/9781003590071-9

that is "preferred" and "enacted."[7] Challenging the supposition that conservation is anathema to change, the survival of time-based media installations demonstrates that, to the contrary, change is often a necessary condition of survival.[8]

In what follows, I take Berger's invocation of movement as a starting point for a more materially grounded line of inquiry into the multiplicity of artworks. While Berger's essay is primarily concerned with works most readily associated with "kinetic art," I suggest that any consideration of what it means for an artwork to move today cannot be separated from the recognition that matter itself is characterized by intrinsic activity—and, in this sense, by transformative processes that are self-generated. An increasing number of scholars have emphasized that the dominant tendency to disregard the active nature of matter, a disposition rooted in the foundational assumptions of Western thought, carries significant political implications in a post-anthropocentric age. There is now an imperative to rethink the foundations of human exceptionalism and to critically acknowledge the efficacy of nonhuman actants in configuring the material world, including the materials that constitute artworks and artifacts, which perform in ways that cannot be reduced to human intention alone.[9] Within this context, Berger's reflections on the movement and transformation of artworks take on renewed significance: if all matter exists in perpetual motion, any artwork composed of material substances necessarily changes over time. Might we then ask if all such artworks—whether "old" or "new"—lack, at their crux, a definitive state of preservation?[10] In this sense, would not all material preservation be paradoxical?

Multiplicity as material condition

My intervention here is to gradually unpack the proposition that multiplicity is an inherent material condition of artworks, unfolding over time through vibrant processes such as decay and degradation. To do so, I begin by turning to the idea of the multiple as it first emerged at the end of the 1950s. More specifically, I focus on Daniel Spoerri's Edition MAT (Multiplication d'Art Transformables), established in 1959. This was arguably the first concerted attempt to build something of a concrete infrastructure around the production and dissemination of multiples—the "multiple" in the postwar period being largely, if ambivalently, understood in opposition to the singular art object, often appearing as three-dimensional forms promised in considerable or unlimited quantities.[11] Though not mentioned by name, Berger was likely thinking of the MAT multiples when addressing the challenges of preservation. One of the defining features of the Edition MAT's inaugural collection—subsequently followed by two more in 1964 and 1965—was its explicit thematization of movement: optical and mechanical, in the very terms Berger describes, as well as participatory and interactive.

For Spoerri, movement was also more than a theme: it was a prerequisite. Central to his logic of the multiple, movement—and the transformations it enabled—was the very condition that made an artwork eligible for multiplication, since such works, conceived in and through change, eluded any single, fixed state. His musings on what makes a multiple *a multiple*, on the one hand, and, on the other, what

it means to multiply, reveal a surprising theoretical dexterity. These insights point to another dimension of Spoerri's thinking on multiplication that has often been acknowledged but rarely examined in depth: an understanding of the multiple that extends beyond its usual framing as a strategy for democratizing art consumption and expanding the art market (though these aims remained significant). More fundamentally, as this chapter argues, Spoerri was concerned with the conceptual stakes of multiplication itself, specifically its capacity to enact the conditions of movement integral to the very conception of the artwork being multiplied.

Certainly, it would be inaccurate to categorize the Edition MAT as (or to conflate it with) a Fluxus initiative—though, as I briefly note, Spoerri did at times produce MAT multiples in collaboration with Fluxus affiliates, some of whom he had known well before their involvement with Fluxus. Chronologically speaking, Fluxus's canonical public debut in Wiesbaden—the opening event of the touring Fluxus festivals, widely regarded as marking Fluxus's formal beginnings—did not take place until 1962, three years after the Edition MAT had first been set in motion. It would be a further six years after 1959, from 1965 onward, before George Maciunas, Fluxus's self-styled "chairman," fully dedicated himself to the production and publication of Fluxus multiples.[12] Yet it also cannot be overlooked that both multiplication initiatives emerged within the same cultural milieu, linked in particular by a shared sensitivity to an emergent temporal consciousness that, from an ontological standpoint, displaced the notion of the artwork as materially and semantically fixed through static objecthood, privileging instead processes of transformation and becoming.[13] If movement played a distinctive role in Spoerri's approach to the MAT multiples, within the Fluxus context, Maciunas established his own conditions for continuous change. Fluxus editions frequently appeared with altered components, characterized by what Natilee Harren describes as an "errant allographism," that underpinned the sanctioned slippage of works across their own iterations. Such variability was conducive to Maciunas's rejection of the regulatory standardization that underwrote the multiple's value, authenticity and increasing embrace by the art world.[14]

It is important to clarify that this chapter does not undertake a comprehensive historical or theoretical comparison of Spoerri's and Maciunas's approaches to multiplication, nor of the MAT and Fluxus multiples themselves, though these topics have been addressed by Fluxus scholars elsewhere.[15] Rather, by probing Spoerri's logic of the multiple, I aim to expand upon his proposition that transformation is a fundamental condition of multiplicity, using this as an invitation to rethink the materiality of artworks more broadly and ultimately reach beyond both MAT and Fluxus multiples, as well as the postwar phenomenon of "the multiple" itself.

If, for example, a classical oil painting undergoes transformation at the granular level of its material, might it not also possess an inherent multiplicity, as its material states continuously unfold over time through inevitable decay and degradation? Can even the deep-rooted belief in a painting's singular and fixed condition, then, be fundamentally complicated by embracing the physical reality of its material becoming? And if so, does this not significantly broaden the understanding of what

can be considered a multiple—and, by extension, of what might hypothetically be multiplied? Though perhaps not yet present in the 1959 MAT collection, Spoerri, best known for his pioneering engagement with food as artistic material, would soon begin to experiment explicitly with decaying organic materials, foregrounding the processes of change within artworks to a still more radical extent. Food would, in fact, eventually become Spoerri's material of choice for multiplication, precisely because of its susceptibility to deterioration. Nevertheless, I suggest that material transformation, such as decay, not only finds a resonant space within Spoerri's logic of the multiple as it emerged through MAT's early articulation, but moreover, that it also extends it. Even when decay is neither deliberately embraced nor foregrounded in artistic practice, transformation inevitably unfolds within all materials, including those typically perceived as stable or inert.

In this vein, I propose that, regardless of form or substance, all materially constituted artworks exist along a continuum of active matter. This realization prompts the need for a new culture of the material in conservation, in which the very concept of the "material" and its value is not, or is not only, grounded in material authenticity, nor bound to the assumption that objects convey objective and enduring truths. To begin outlining this culture, I turn to philosopher Gilbert Simondon (1924–89) and his concept of individuation, which offers a foundational rethinking of how matter and form co-emerge through dynamic processes of becoming. Drawing on Simondon—and on contemporary theorists who extend his work—I propose a culture of the material that understands matter not as inert substance, but as energetically charged, relational and active. To conclude, I examine the theoretical implications of taking active, rather than passive, matter as a starting point for understanding activation. Reconsidering the notion of "activation" from its dominant usage in current conservation discourse, I suggest it be understood not as the external animation of an otherwise deadened object, but as an avowal and cultivation of matter's intrinsic activity as a vibrant process already underway. From this perspective, conservation may be conceptualized as an intervention within the continuum of active matter that seeks to determine, to varying degrees, the course and extent of material transformation.

Spoerri's logic of the multiple: The Edition MAT

> The static objective work permits only quantitative multiplication of the fixed idea present within the model; even if it was widely disseminated, multiplication would not add anything to it. For the animated work, either by itself or through the interaction of the viewer-collaborator, multiplication is a justice done to the infinite possibilities of transformation.[16]

With these words, Daniel Spoerri opens the Edition MAT's first hybrid sales/exhibition catalog, published for MAT's debut at the Galerie Edouard Loeb in Paris in November 1959. This event marked the first of a six-month tour of exhibitions promoting the multiples across Europe. (In addition to Paris, exhibitions would also be held in Milan, London, Newcastle, Stockholm, Krefeld and Zurich.) The

catalog advertised multiples by, among others, Jean Tinguely, Marcel Duchamp, Victor Vasarely and Dieter Roth, to be sold in editions of 100 and uniformly priced at the modern-day equivalent of roughly 30 euros. Each multiple took the form of a portable three-dimensional object and exhibited one of three types of movement. There were mechanized works such as Tinguely's *Constante indéterminée*, a rattling, motor-powered machine that frenetically whirred and whizzed. Duchamp's *Rotoreliefs*, composed of rotating spiral discs, similarly employed mechanization, but effected a far subtler degree of movement. Forgoing the motor altogether, Vasarely's *Keiho* and *Markab* achieved movement through optical illusion, while Roth's *Book AA* redirected attention from vision to touch as a set of loose cardboard sheets, reconfigurable by the viewer to create new and shifting aesthetic compositions. In each case, movement—whether mechanical, optical or rooted in tactile encounter—meant that, for Spoerri, reproducing an artwork as a multiple offered the "means of multiplication it deserves."[17]

Not yet identifying as a visual artist, but with a background in dance and theater, Spoerri assumed a largely editorial role in the Edition MAT, similar to his work for the concrete poetry journal *Material* (1958–60), which he co-founded with Claus Bremer, artistic director of the Staatstheater in Darmstadt. This involvement with concrete poetry led Spoerri to connect with Emmett Williams in the late 1950s, with whom he collaborated within the Darmstadt circle of concrete poetry, prior to their affiliation with Fluxus, and later again for the 1965 collection of the Edition MAT, alongside George Brecht and Robert Filliou. (Spoerri even imagined a further, musically themed collection of the Edition MAT with the "Fluxus people," including Joe Jones and Nam June Paik, which never materialized.)[18] While he later outsourced the fabrication and publication of the multiples to Galerie Der Spiegel in Cologne, it was largely Spoerri who, for MAT's 1959 collection, selected and commissioned the artworks to be multiplied, hand-assembled the multiples and oversaw their advertising, sale and distribution. But beyond these tasks, Spoerri's most fascinating intervention was his underlying logic of multiplication, which determined what should—and what should not—be multiplied. This logic, conceptually rooted in movement, struck an additional biographical chord. Before his training in classical ballet, Spoerri was, first and foremost, a child refugee of war, an experience that arguably instilled in him an early sense of nomadism. This sensibility perhaps helps explain his fluid navigation of what are typically regarded as distinct neo-avant-garde circles, without ever declaring absolute allegiance to any single one. In addition to his Fluxus entanglements from 1962 onward—beginning with his involvement in the "Festival of Misfits" in London, a continuation of the European Fluxus festivals—Spoerri most notably also took part in the activities of Group ZERO as it emerged in Düsseldorf in the late 1950s, before going on to become one of the founding members of the Paris-based ensemble of Nouveau Réalisme in 1960.

Understanding why and how movement functions as a unifying principle across the first collection of MAT multiples is essential to grasping Spoerri's approach to multiplication. In his highly revealing opening statements to the 1959 catalog, Spoerri distinguished his project from "classical" modes of reproduction, including lithography and bronze casting, arguing that, for reproduction to have a meaningful

effect, it must align with an artwork's own mode of operation.[19] Establishing a dichotomy between the "static" and "animated" work of art—a distinction I will later complicate—Spoerri asserted that only animated artworks are enriched by multiplication, as they already contain "infinite possibilities of transformation" within themselves.[20] Seen in this way, movement was more than a mere formal or aesthetic device; it was considered an ontological condition fundamental to the very nature of an artwork's existence. Because movement ensures transformation, and transformation animates, artworks imbued with motion are especially suited to multiplication.

Movement also served as a means of incorporating the viewer into the work of art. At times, Spoerri even positioned viewer participation as the principal agent of an artwork's transformations. Roth's *Book AA* demanded participatory involvement most overtly, but the shifting patterns of Vasarely's optical illusions depended on active looking, while the mechanized multiples required, at the very least, that the motor be switched on. Where Spoerri writes in relation to the MAT multiples that an artwork is guaranteed to transform because it is subject to the "whims, mood, and personality" of what he calls the "viewer-collaborator," this reads as remarkably anticipatory of later theorizations surrounding the transformation of Fluxus objects and performances.[21] I am thinking here of Owen F. Smith's influential notion of the "non-hierarchical density of experience," which Hannah B Higgins elaborates in *Fluxus Experience* (2002) in relation to the Fluxkits and other Fluxus forms.[22] The Fluxkit as a work of art exists in and through participatory, multisensory engagement. Since no single experience constitutes the work *par excellence*, it resists any privileged or fixed state of being.[23] Similarly, for Spoerri, viewer participation liberates the artwork from conformity to a singular moment in space and time—not least its initial point of conception—allowing multiplication to facilitate the work's re-emergence in new spatiotemporal contexts, reconstituted with each new engagement.

This spatiotemporal fluidity marks another important distinction between static and animated artworks. As Spoerri put it, the reproduction of static artworks "feels questionable," and questionable because, he continues, the "vitality" of a static work is only ever "truly present when it first comes into being."[24] Writing in 1960 for the Munich-based student journal *Nota*, Spoerri clarifies the importance of an artwork's capacity to move through space and time:

> When an image is in change, whether due to actual or merely apparent motion, it enters into an ongoing state of transformation, making it endlessly new and different. Because it is created through movement, multiplication can happen at any moment, as it is always changing and renewing itself over time.[25]

Here, Spoerri appears to be suggesting that because animated artworks are already in the process of becoming "endlessly new and different," multiplication offers another means by which the work might continually transform. To make another multiple is itself a type of movement for an artwork to undergo, and another means through which the work can move across space and time. Spatiality, temporality

and multiplicity operate here in tandem: Spoerri's proposition that an artwork is "always changing and renewing itself over time" suggests that, even prior to reproduction, the animated work possesses an internal capacity for self-multiplication. This internal capacity is not entirely self-sufficient. The multiples still require a degree of "activation," as it were, to initiate an artwork's movements and, in turn, its transformation. Even so, by Spoerri's logic, this constitutive element of transformation entails a fragmentation of an artwork into successive states that cumulatively sustain an enduring condition of change—of which the new multiple is simply the latest momentary state or instantiation of the work. Each act of multiplication extends the artwork's ongoing becoming—its becoming multiple in itself—and affirms that the multiple remains perpetually open and unfinished, suspended in a protracted state of creation.

In practice, however, the editioning of the MAT multiples in limited numbers may have curtailed the hypothetical potential for spontaneous proliferation, that is, the very possibility that "multiplication can happen at any moment."[26] This strategy is symptomatic of what Erika Balsom has described as "the artificial imposition of scarcity," a common market-oriented tactic used to increase an artwork's desirability and exchange value.[27] (By contrast, Fluxus object production notably resisted this commercial orientation: Maciunas, for instance, often celebrated the essential worthlessness of Fluxus things to critique the artwork-as-commodity, and was in ways thus more radical than Spoerri.)[28] To fully honor what Spoerri calls an artwork's "intrinsic potential"—a potential from which multiplication emerges—would be to permit an open-ended number of multiples to proliferate, in line with Spoerri's more philosophical reflections on an artwork's boundless possibilities for change.[29]

On internal multiplicities and decay

The idea that artworks might multiply from within themselves (even if partially dependent on the viewer) deserves careful examination to understand how the multiples unfold continuously across space and time, perhaps most powerfully visualized in Spoerri's artistic contribution to the Edition MAT. It was not until the project's second installment in 1964 that he presented his own realization of a multipliable work of art. A photograph shows Spoerri standing in front of *Spiegelobjekt*, a mixed-media collage of everyday knick-knacks—including kitchen utensils and children's toys—affixed to two mirrors, hinged together and propped open like a book. The glimpse of Spoerri's back reflected in one of the mirrors quite literally *mirrors* the immersion of a viewer whose presence is folded into the artwork itself, obscuring the boundary between observer and observed (Figure 6.1). The work functions as a *mise en abyme* of sorts: the objects caught between the mirrored panels appear endlessly multiplied, their reflections reverberating between the two surfaces in a recursive play of things that gestures toward an imagined infinity. This effect gives palpable expression to the inherent multiplicity residing in a singular artwork. Each reflection stands in as a new state of the same work, intensified by the viewer's ability to adjust the angle of the mirrors, which alters the way the objects are reflected and subsequently multiplied anew.

Figure 6.1 Portrait of Daniel Spoerri, c. 1964. Swiss National Library, Prints and Drawings Department: Daniel Spoerri archives. © 2025, ProLitteris, Zurich.

The conception of multiplicity as the dynamic unfolding of an artwork's transformations finds its conceptual origins in two of Spoerri's earlier series of works, alongside the Edition MAT, conceived in the Hôtel Carcassonne: the *Multiplicateurs d'Art* and *Tableaux Pièges*. *Spiegelobjekt* can be regarded as a later iteration of the *Multiplicateurs* under a different title. Appearing as early as 1962, Spoerri described the *Multiplicateurs* as a fusion of chance and creation: the objects glued to the mirrors constitute a "chance situation," randomly collated and positioned rather than deliberately arranged (Figure 6.2).[30] In a similar and anticipatory vein, the *Tableaux Pièges*, the earliest examples of which date to 1960, are likewise generated through chance, comprising ensnared tabletops rather than the mirrors used as surfaces in *Spiegelobjekt* and the *Multiplicateurs d'Art*. Often, the *Tableaux Pièges* preserved the remnants of meals, including dirty plates with leftover food, cigarette butts and loaves of bread (Figure 6.3).[31] Importantly, though assembled from the residue of chance events, the *Tableaux Pièges* are not fixed records of a past moment, but, having emerged through chance, continue to evolve as chance situations in their own right. As Spoerri explains: "Working with chance situations implies the acceptance of chance as a collaborator after the initial result has been achieved of transformations due to time, weather, corrosion, dirt."[32] In a well-known anecdote, frequently recounted by Spoerri, his embrace of chance was dramatically put to the test when rats ravaged two of his *Tableaux Pièges* stored at the Galleria Schwarz in Milan. When the gallerist Arturo Schwarz asked Spoerri to replace the rat-eaten parts, Spoerri refused and provocatively declared: "Doing without conservation involves overthrowing taboos."[33]

Figure 6.2 Daniel Spoerri, *Multiplicateur d'art*, 1962. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn/Philippe Migeat|Christian Bahier. © 2025, ProLitteris, Zurich.

Such potent statements appeared to inform the later conservation of the *Tableaux Pièges*. Among the files of Jon Hendricks, the curator of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, is a transcript of the presentation "Food Art Beyond its Expiry Date," given by Barbara Otterbeck, then-conservator at the Archiv Sohm, at the conference *From Marble to Chocolate: The Conservation of Modern Sculpture*, held at the Tate Gallery in 1995. In light of Spoerri's framing of chance as his collaborator, Otterbeck questions the impulse to save bits of bread from ravenous bread beetles and to consolidate the now crumbling substance, which had, by then, partially turned to dust.[34] Read through this tension, the *Tableaux Pièges* aestheticize the paradox of preservation highlighted by John Berger: the attempt to trap and immortalize an otherwise fleeting moment—and the ultimate impossibility of doing so. For Spoerri, the *Tableau Piège* deliberately confronts the dynamic between the transient nature of material things and human attempts to permanently trap—as in preserve—them. Later recalling an epiphany he had on an airplane, Spoerri noticed that, though racing at some 800 or 900 kilometers per hour through the sky, everything on Earth appeared still. "Then I realized," Spoerri continues, "that movement also includes standstill. Namely, the standstill of situations that are otherwise already moving."[35] This nuanced conception of movement—not only as overt motion but also as subtle and at times

Figure 6.3 Various *Tableaux Piegès* on the walls of room no. 13, l'Hôtel Carcassonne, c. 1962. Swiss National Library, Prints and Drawings Department: Daniel Spoerri archives. Courtesy Vera Mercer.

imperceptible—invokes the gradual, easily overlooked transformations of matter underlying material processes such as decay and degradation. Working with materials, whether as an artist or a conservator, is itself a chance situation: the activity of matter and its impact on material properties can be unpredictable and difficult to control.[36]

Spoerri's understanding of movement, however, did not always extend to processes of decay. In the 1959 collection of the Edition MAT, for instance, material transformation was not explicitly recognized as one of an artwork's three modes of movement. Furthermore, as I discuss in the following section, the inevitability of decay complicates—even collapses—Spoerri's binary between static and animated artworks. The possibility of material transformation appears more directly in Spoerri's contribution of *Abfall im Brotteig* to the Edition MAT's 1965 collection, which involved waste baked into bread dough (Figure 6.4). These bread dough multiples anticipate Spoerri's later multiplication initiative under the rubric of the Eat Art Galerie in Düsseldorf, which opened in 1970 above the Restaurant Spoerri, established two years prior. The Eat Art multiples, featuring contributions throughout the decade such as Joseph Beuys's fried fishbones and George Brecht's liquorice portraits, knowingly engaged perishable materials, offering one of the most potent challenges to conventional ideas of permanence in art of Spoerri's

generation.[37] Certainly, Spoerri's growing interest in food throughout the 1960s was partly because, as he recognized, "the edible is the most changeable thing there is."[38]

Figure 6.4 Daniel Spoerri, *Abfall im Brotteig*, 1965. Swiss National Library, Prints and Drawings Department: Daniel Spoerri archives. © 2025, ProLitteris, Zurich.

Spoerri's turn to food as material for his multiples draws upon, but also intensifies, his earlier logic of the multiple, premised on an artwork's capacity for movement. As organic matter, food renders an artwork's transformations almost immediately visible—arguably making it the most "moveable" of materials—but in doing so, it exaggerates the slower, subtler processes that all matter enacts over time. A closer look at *Spiegelobjekt*, for instance—this particular instance of which shows clear signs of desilvering or "mirror rot"—exposes the changeability of what is only ostensibly unchangeable matter (Figure 6.2). On one level, this decay acts as a reminder of the more autonomous vitality of an artwork's material substrate. On another, it unveils a mode of self-multiplication unfolding at a granular scale, beyond the artist's immediate intention or the viewer's initial perception: the work multiplies internally and in itself, not only through the reflected objects or the viewer's manipulation of the mirrors but also through its own process of decay and degradation.

The continuum of active matter

With the vibrant activity—and thus movements—of matter in mind, Spoerri's dichotomy between static and animate works of art, as articulated in relation to the 1959 collection of the Edition MAT, becomes increasingly untenable: arguably, no artwork can ever be truly inert. Even if not programmed to move by an artist, the artwork—by virtue of its constituent materials—undergoes change at the level of matter. For instance, Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (c. 1503–6), by no means animate according to Spoerri's criteria, can nevertheless be said to move in terms of the ongoing chemical interactions between its layers of paint, varnish and binding agents, its poplar wood panel and the surrounding environment. Movement manifests most potently here as craquelure, an intricate network of cracks that develops on a painting's surface as the aging paint contracts and pulls apart over time. In fact, the *Mona Lisa*'s craquelure is reportedly so extensive that the panel has been at risk of splitting for at least two centuries.[39] In addition to craquelure, a painting may also demonstrate material transformation through phenomena such as flaking, blistering and discoloration, among others. These relatively slow yet persistent processes attest to the extent to which so-called static artworks are never completely at rest, despite the stabilizing efforts of classical conservation practices.[40] Accordingly, it becomes more accurate to understand the key distinction between static and animate artworks not as an absolute and binary difference in kind, but as a difference defined by degrees and types of animacy. Both the *Mona Lisa* and Duchamp's *Rotoreliefs* (and, to further contribute to this mix, Beuys's fried fishbones), for example, can be understood as animate—albeit to differing extents and intensities.

Of course, at their most elemental, the MAT multiples, like oil paintings, are likewise aggregations of matter. Thus, beyond movement by means of mechanization, optical illusion and tactile interaction, the MAT multiples must also transform along the axis of material decay. Upon observing Soto's multiples housed in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, librarian and archivist Friedrich Tietjen notably

draws attention to their corroded metal fittings.[41] In keeping with this attention to corroding metals, it should perhaps come as little surprise to stumble across a deteriorating *Constante indéterminée*—Tinguely is, after all, best known for repurposing rusty scrap metals into self-devouring structures. One especially disheveled instance of *Constante indéterminée*, sold at auction in 2019, shows its metal support structure mangled and bent out of shape, its black paint peeling and the surface visibly mottled by oxidation.[42] Certainly, movement—especially mechanized movements as pronounced as *Constante indéterminée*'s—accelerate the pace of decay, a paradox conservators of kinetic art have grappled with for decades.[43] Yet it also holds true that decay eventually sets in with or without, say, the assistance of a motor. Even the optical illusion wears out in the end. Consider Vasarely's compositions: although, as optical illusions, Vasarely's works do not physically move at surface level, conservation reports have shed light on their processes of degradation, including the emergence of craquelure and even traces of insect activity. In doing so, they point once again to the vitality of matter itself: not as a passive substrate, but as an active agent in ongoing processes of becoming, both in and of the world.[44]

Characterized by movement unfolding across two planes of existence—their programmed activity on one level, and inherent material transformations on another—the early MAT multiples bring to light an otherwise implicit reality in ways akin to, yet far more subtle than, the organic processes present in food. At the convergence of these planes, the modality of movements intended by the artists—whether motorized, optical or interactive—can be read not only as foundational to Spoerri's logic of multiplication. Like the self-referentiality of the later *Spiegelobjekt*, they also function as dramatic realizations of the latent activity within their own material constitution. Exposing the illusion of material stasis, what emerges in place of Spoerri's categories of the static work of art on the one hand and the animate on the other, is a continuum of activity that denotes the field of ongoing material processes in which all matter remains dynamically in motion. These processes may be influenced or intervened in, through conservation, for instance, but never fully halted or controlled.

Expanding the realm of multiplication

It is worth asking how Spoerri's logic of the multiple might be rearticulated in light of an artwork's expanded capacity to move. It is here that Spoerri's conception of multiplication can also begin to account for the possibility of multiplying artworks far beyond the conceptual scope of the Edition MAT. If movement can be taken as a defining feature of the multiple, might the inherent activity of matter—embedded in the material of artworks themselves and signaling an internal multiplicity more fundamental than Spoerri initially conceived—also constitute grounds for multiplication? And, by extension, would this not drastically widen the kind of artworks that lend themselves to—or perhaps even initiate their own—multiplication? Pushing Spoerri's logic of the multiple to its speculative limits: do not *all* artworks, at least in principle, possess the potential for multiplication?

To deepen this proposition, it is useful to turn here to philosopher Gilbert Simondon's critique of hylomorphism. Originating with Aristotle, hylomorphism posits that all created entities are composites of matter (*hylē*) and form (*morphē*). This ontological schema was further consolidated by early modern philosophical paradigms—most notably, Cartesian dualism—which asserted a strict division between mind and matter. As a result, materials were increasingly construed as inert, passive receptacles awaiting realization by the mental or ideational force of form.[45] For Simondon, hylomorphism fails to capture the intricacies that underpin the interplay of matter and form in processes of production. To illustrate his argument, Simondon closely examines the processes involved in the fabrication of a brick from clay. To take on the shape of a brick, clay neither passively receives nor is imposed upon by a preexisting mold—rather, it becomes *individuated* through a negotiation with form. By "individuation," Simondon means to account for the dynamic processes through which things come into being—always in relation. Clay, for instance, both sets the parameters of and imposes limits on the form it may take according to the internal tensions and capacities of its physical properties (Simondon notes that one could hardly make durable bricks from sand), even as it is simultaneously shaped by that form.[46]

Crucially, Simondon understands these properties as energetically charged potentialities, as matter that inherently contains implicit forms. To mold a brick from clay, then, is not strictly to mold, but to *modulate*.[47] "Modulation"—unlike the intransigence of molding—is a reciprocal and attuned engagement with matter's potentiality: as Simondon states unambiguously, "matter is only informable matter because it can, point by point, be the bearer of an energy that becomes actualized."[48] A mold must necessarily be responsive to matter, since form can only emerge through its co-constitution with the material it seeks to shape. Along these lines, clay ultimately assumes the form of a brick with a complexity far surpassing that which the hylomorphic model can account for: through individuation, form modulates matter as the actualization of energetic potentials incipient within the matter itself.[49]

Another salient point Simondon makes is that individuation does not permanently fix matter into a final form: rather, matter continues to be individuated over time. As Simondon speculates, "at the end of several years or several thousand years, the brick turns back into dust."[50] Accordingly, processes of de-formation—of decay and degradation—might be regarded not as a loss of form but as continued form-taking activity, modulated with and by means other than the brick mold, including environmental influences like moisture in the air and the abrasiveness of wind. If Simondon's analysis of the individuation of bricks from clay (and their eventual return to dust) can be taken as analogous to the formation and transformation of artworks, then an important insight for conservation is this: any modulation of matter into artworks and material culture more broadly represents just one possible and necessarily temporary configuration within matter's ongoing process of becoming.

For Spoerri, multiplication both affirms and extends the potential of artworks to transform. Pushing this proposition further, Simondon's critique of hylomorphism

enables a broader reading of Spoerri's conception of an artwork's transformative potential—one that incorporates material change, whether intentionally or incidentally woven into the conceptual fabric of the work, and, in this way, not wholly dissimilar from Spoerri's naming of chance as his collaborator. To clarify, what is at stake here is not whether all artworks should be multiplied on these grounds in practice, but rather, what might be gained from the suggestion that they *might* be. Reconsidering multiplicity, in this sense, also compels a rethinking of materiality itself. As alluded to in the case of the *Mona Lisa*, processes of decay disclose the most fundamental movements of all artworks, each of which, in their own way, exists along a continuum of active matter. Decay, as a kind of primordial or elemental movement, invites multiplication because it is through an artwork's inevitable unravelling that it reveals itself to be always already inscribed with an inward multiplicity. In this vein, multiplication might be understood not only as a means of reproduction but also as an avowal of matter's intrinsic generativity—a process of becoming that extends through degradation—and as itself an extension of this generativity. Pursuing this line of thought to its logical conclusion, might it be possible to ask whether the *Mona Lisa*'s aggressive craquelure can serve as the basis of multiplication—as evidence of the painting's multiplying within itself into different material states?

Toward a new culture of the material in conservation

To emphasize the transience of all material forms is not to suggest the futility of conservation, but to actively encourage its release from the burden of maintaining an illusory material stasis. Such a release calls for a rethinking of the assumptions that underlie conservation's conceptualization of matter—assumptions still largely shaped by its long-standing affiliation with the natural sciences. Scientific, or so-called material-based, conservation has historically codified matter as both truth-bearing and evidentiary, a legible substrate capable of revealing objective knowledge about the artwork's original materials and the artist's intention.[51] It is important to recognize here, however, that scientific conservation represents just one tradition among many. Across more diverse conservation cultures—not all of which seek to neutralize or pacify the material—recognition of transformation as intrinsic to an object's value is well established. Even with Western traditions, theorists and practitioners have long argued for the preservation of certain material changes, such as the aesthetic and historical value of patina.[52]

Simondon's insights provide a critical lens through which to reconsider the positivist foundations of Western conservation, as narrowly understood today. My contention is that because material thinking in conservation has long been anchored in the natural sciences, theoretical engagement with materials continues to affirm matter's subservience to form, often in direct tension with the transformative and individuating capacities of matter that Simondon foregrounds. Yet this tension also reveals a more complex relationship between conservation and the hylomorphic model. As Soon Kai Poh observes, conservators do not operate on the assumption that matter is inherently inert. On the contrary, as Poh puts it, it is precisely the

notion of activity—not passivity—that carries a distinct "material bias."[53] Conservators are necessarily acutely aware of the material's pervasive activity and its inherent propensity to change. Indeed, the very existence of conservation is symptomatic of this activity: were matter truly inert, the need for conservation—or for any human intervention in the name of repair—would not exist.

Paradoxically, then, conservation both acknowledges and disavows the vitality of matter. Its very existence is premised on material change, yet it often seeks to suppress the very transformations that call it into being. Matter is still mostly expected to conform to institutional norms of control and stability. Rather than assuming, as hylomorphism does, that matter is passive, conservation begins with the recognition of activity but then seeks to regulate and contain it within acceptable thresholds. This plays out in practice, for instance, in decisions about how much discoloration is tolerable, or whether a crack indicates acceptable aging or should be classified as damage.[54] In this way, the hylomorphic worldview persists in conservation, not as an ontological assumption, but as an aspirational endpoint. Matter may be recognized as active, but it is ultimately managed to behave as if it were passive—or at least, as close to this as possible.

The ongoing regulation and containment of matter's activity is largely governed by what Salvador Muñoz Viñas has described as conservation's "unspoken material theory," grounded in the enduring influence of scientific positivism.[55] Within this framework, materials are treated as repositories of empirical truth, and conservation assumes the role of a "truth-enforcement operation," tasked with revealing or maintaining an object's "integrity" or "true nature."[56] Central to this logic is the idea of an artwork's "ideal state": a material condition believed to best embody the work's most authentic or authoritative instance, often associated with a privileged moment of creation. While the notion of the ideal state has roots in earlier theories of restoration, its consolidation as a professional standard was largely driven by the discipline's alignment with scientific methodologies. Technological advances throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries enabled increasingly sophisticated analyses of materials and deterioration processes, rendering the ideal state increasingly locatable, and an artwork's truth ever more enforceable in material terms.[57]

But what kind of culture surrounding the material might emerge—if only tentatively here—if conservation were, as James Elkins provocatively suggests in another setting, to take a "short course in forgetting chemistry"?[58] Tim Ingold offers one possible starting point for consideration. Further elaborating on Elkins's provocation, Ingold argues that the interest here is not in what materials *are* in terms of their molecular composition, but in the more alchemical concern with what they *do*.[59] Drawing on philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari—who themselves draw on Simondon—Ingold proposes that materials should be understood as dynamic processes to be *followed* in their perpetual flux: to follow "the flows and transformations of materials as against states of matter."[60] This view of materials as generative and regenerative is reminiscent of Spoerri's logic of the multiple, which might itself be read as a kind of "following" in Ingold's sense, insofar as multiplication "follows" what the artworks—and, as I have argued, the

materials—"do" themselves: multiply. Taking inspiration from Ingold, the conception of materials in conservation might begin to shift away from the underlying principle of control, moving instead toward a theoretical orientation grounded in Simondon's articulation of the matter–form nexus as one of attentive accompaniment and mutual responsiveness. This shift might even refigure conservation as the facilitation of material activity—what the expanded logic of multiplication arguably exemplifies—and, in this sense, open new conceptual ground for thinking through what it means to activate.

Activation: Animating the continuum

To initiate a new culture of the material in conservation is to reconceive how the concept of "material" itself is theorized. This effort begins by following materials at the most basic level of what they do: transform. Refigured in this light, materials might be understood as always already active and in flux, however imperceptible such processes may be. As I have argued, artworks, by virtue of their material constitution, exist along a continuum of active matter—an ongoing field of transformation in which conservation efforts participate. If it can be accepted that artworks exist within this continuum, then the conventional definition of activation, as a means of "making active," no longer holds—indeed, to "make active" presupposes a prior state of inactivity or lifelessness.

This conceptual legacy still inheres in discourses and practices of contemporary art conservation. Originating more specifically in the context of performance conservation, activation is generally understood, to borrow from Tate Modern's working definition, as "the process of preparing the performance for display and presenting it in an active and live manner."[61] Performance, when not on display or enacted, is frequently theorized as existing in a dormant state, potentially persisting through its material traces—props, relics, leftovers—but, lacking visibility or audience engagement, considered neither active nor live.[62] To activate, in this sense, is to transition a performance from dormancy to activity, situating the public, the performance and, by extension, the artist within a dynamic social and temporal relation.[63]

Conceiving artworks along a continuum of activity, however, demands a still more nuanced understanding of activation than the transition from dormancy to activation. I propose instead that what it means to activate might be reimagined less as a "making active" than as adding to the repertoire of the already active, another potential expression of an artwork's transformation. In this view, activation does not initiate an artwork's activity from a state of dormancy, as if serving as an external catalyst or a corrective to perceived stasis. Rather, to activate is to facilitate the activity of forces already incipient within the artwork itself, and to follow the trajectory of what is already unfolding with attentiveness to the layered dimensions of an artwork's materiality in its fullest articulation. Finally, returning again to the Edition MAT multiples—Duchamp's *Rotoreliefs*, for instance—activating the artwork in a conventional sense might mean switching the discs on, initiating perceptible movement. Multiplication, too, might be understood as a form

of activation—not in the literal sense of flicking a switch or button, but because it initiates an artwork's movement across space and time, and is another process through which a work becomes active. Yet insofar as the *Rotoreliefs* are already active, they are also in a sense activated even in the absence of human intervention. Even when seemingly at rest—like the *Mona Lisa*—the *Rotoreliefs* are never entirely still: they might multiply internally, corrode, gather dust and fade away. Starting the work's movement, then, does not presuppose that the *Rotoreliefs* were ever "off," but rather intensifies the visibility of the *Rotoreliefs*' movements and, moreover, diversifies their expressive potential. Understood in this way, activation can be seen as a form of conservation intervention that fosters material activity, further animating the dynamic continuum of transformation rather than seeking to arrest or stabilize it—a practice that, in Spoerri's words, "is a justice done to the infinite possibilities of transformation."[64]

Acknowledgments

The research for this chapter was carried out in the context of the research project *Activating Fluxus*, based at Bern Academy of the Arts and funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. My deepest gratitude goes to Hanna B. Hölling and Aga Wielocha for their thoughtful suggestions and meticulous readings of this chapter throughout its various stages. I also extend thanks to Kristina Pfister, Beat Scherrer and Fabia Hiltbrunner from the Graphische Sammlung at the Schweizerische Nationalbibliothek, Bern; Ilona Lütken from the Archiv Sohm, Stuttgart; and, the staff of the Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York, for their invaluable assistance in facilitating my research.

Notes

1 John Berger, "Art and Property Now," in *Landscapes: John Berger on Art*, ed. Tom Overton (London: Verso, 2016), 163.
2 Berger, "Art and Property," 163.
3 Fernando Domínguez Rubio, "The Arts of the Same," in *The Expanded Field of Conservation*, eds. Caroline Fowler and Alexander Nagel (Williamstown, MA: Clark Art Institute, 2022), 142–60. For a critique of this narrow understanding of conservation, see Lotte Arndt and Noemie Étienne, "Transforming Conservation: Challenging Hegemonic Models, Broadening the Realm of the Concerned, Changing Practices," *Museums and Social Issues* 17, nos. 1–2 (2023): 1–9.
4 Peter N. Miller, "Report on a Research Project," in *Conserving Active Matter*, eds. Soon Kai Poh and Peter N. Miller (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2022), xi.
5 Brian Castriota, "The Enfolding Object of Conservation: Artwork Identity, Authenticity, and Documentation," in *Conservation of Contemporary Art: Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice*, eds. Renée van de Vall and Vivian van Saaze (Cham: Springer, 2024), 60.
6 Pip Laurenson, "Authenticity, Change and Loss in the Conservation of Time-Based Media Installations," *Tate Papers*, no. 6 (2006), https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/06/authenticity-change-and-loss-conservation-of-time-based-media-installations. For a recent critique of the notion of "work-defining properties," see Castriota, "The Enfolding Object of Conservation," 60–86.
7 Vivian van Saaze, *Installation Art and the Museum: Presentation and Conservation of Changing Artworks* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2013), 61–108.

8 As is well established, the continued existence of these installations depends on the capacity to adapt in response to a variety of factors, including the failure and obsolescence of display equipment, the degree of an artist's involvement, practical and philosophical approaches to documentation and the internal workflow, politics and organizational structure of museums. See Pip Laurenson, "The Management of Display Equipment in Time-Based Media Installations," *Tate Papers*, no. 3 (2005), https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/03/the-management-of-display-equipment-in-time-based-media-installations; Laurenson, "Authenticity, Change and Loss"; van Saaze, *Installation Art*; Johanna Phillips, "Reporting Iterations: A Documentation Model for Time-Based Media Art," *Revista da História da Arte* 4 (2015): 168–79; Hanna B. Hölling, *Paik's Virtual Archive: Time, Change, and Materiality in Media Art* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017).

9 Peter Fratzl and Wolfgang Schäffner, "On the Activity of Materials," in *Active Materials*, eds. Peter Fratzl et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 37; Frank Bauer, Yoonha Kim, Sabine Marienberg and Wolfgang Schäffner, "Toward a New Culture of the Material," in *Toward a New Culture of the Material*, eds. Frank Bauer, Yoonha Kim, Sabine Marienberg and Wolfgang Schäffner (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024), 3.

10 For Cybele Tom, while it is increasingly appreciated in conservation that "new" art lacks fixed material states, approaches to "old" art, including classical painting and sculpture, still hinges on the identification of a static material nature. Cybele Tom, "When the Old Was New: Rethinking Traditional and Contemporary Art and Their Paradigms of Care," in van de Vall and van Saaze, *Conservation of Contemporary Art*, 88.

11 According to Stephen Bury, the difficulty of defining what constitutes a multiple is one of its defining characteristics. Stephen Bury, *Artists' Multiples, 1935–2000* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 1.

12 According to Owen F. Smith, 1965 marked the beginning of a "second phase of Fluxus," one largely focused on the production of Fluxus multiples. While Maciunas already issued several objects during the "first phase"—a period primarily centered on performances and festivals—it was between 1965 and 1968 that the production of Fluxus multiples reached its peak. See Owen F. Smith, *Fluxus: The History of an Attitude* (San Diego: San Diego University Press, 1998), 165.

13 For the emergent temporal consciousness of artists in the postwar period, see Pamela M. Lee, *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).

14 Natilee Harren, *Fluxus Forms: Scores, Multiples, and the Eternal Network* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 148.

15 Julia Robinson, "Multiple Manifestations," in *The Small Utopia: Ars Multiplicata*, ed. Germano Celant (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2012), 137–49. Harren also touches on this briefly, suggesting that, of the postwar multiplication initiatives, Spoerri's Edition MAT best approximated Maciunas's model of production, in Harren, *Fluxus Forms*, 147.

16 Daniel Spoerri, *Edition MAT: Multiplication d'Oeuvres d'Art*, November 1959, GS-SPOERRI-A-04-b-1–3, Daniel Spoerri Archives, Prints and Drawing Department, Swiss National Library, Bern. Automatic translation from French.

17 Spoerri, *Edition MAT.*

18 Spoerri, "Interview mit Daniel Spoerri," by Katarina Vatsella, *Edition MAT: Die Entstehung einer Kunstform: Daniel Spoerri, Karl Gerstner and das Multiple* (Bremen: Hauschild, 1998), 183.

19 Spoerri, *Edition MAT.*

20 Spoerri, *Edition MAT.*

21 Spoerri, "The Multiplied Work of Art," translated by Leah Marie Chizek, in *Multiplied: Edition MAT and the Transformable Work of Art, 1959–1965* (Munich: Hirmer, 2020), 217; originally published as "Das Multiplizierte Kunstwerk," *Nota*, no. 4 (1960): 10–11.

22 Hannah B Higgins, *Fluxus Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), xiv.

23 Higgins writes, for instance, that "to account for Fluxus as experience . . . counters any move to assign specific and permanent meanings to the work," in *Fluxus Experience*, 59.
24 Spoerri, "The Multiplied Work of Art," 216.
25 Spoerri, "The Multiplied Work of Art," 216.
26 Spoerri, "The Multiplied Work of Art," 216.
27 Erika Balsom, "Original Copies: How Film and Video Became Art Objects," *Cinema Journal* 53, no. 1 (2013): 99.
28 In a well-known letter to Tomas Schmit dated to January 1964, Maciunas wrote: "Fluxus is definitely against [the] art-object as [a] non-functional commodity—to be sold and to make [a] livelihood for an artist. It could temporarily have the pedagogical function of teaching people the needlessness of art including the eventual needlessness of itself. It should therefore not be permanent." Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, January 1964, in Jon Hendricks, ed., *Fluxus etc. Addenda II: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* (Pasadena: California Institute of Technology and Baxter Art Gallery, 1983), 166.
29 Spoerri, "The Multiplied Work of Art," 216.
30 Spoerri, *An Anecdoted Topography of Chance*, trans. Emmett Williams (New York: Something Else Press, 1966), 182.
31 Maciunas appears to have been particularly captivated by the *Tableaux Pièges*: the *Vacuum TRapEzoid*—the fifth issue of the *Fluxus Newspaper*, released in March 1965—featured reproductions of the *Tableaux Pièges* as screen-printed linen tablemats, which were later promoted again in 1967 as part of the *Fluxfurniture* series. Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), 485.
32 Spoerri, *Anecdoted Topography*, 181–82.
33 Barbara Otterbeck, "Food Beyond Its Expiry Date," September 1995, VII.A.167, Gilbert and Lila Silverman Archives, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
34 Otterbeck, "Food Beyond."
35 Spoerri, interview by Sebastian Strenger, "In meiner Kindheit hatte ich nie genug zu essen," *Die Welt*, November 18, 2024, https://www.welt.de/kultur/kunst/plus254412282/Daniel-Spoerri-In-meiner-Kindheit-hatte-ich-nie-genug-zu-essen.html, automatic translation from German.
36 Steven W. Dykstra, "The Artist's Intentions and the Intentional Fallacy in Fine Arts Conservation," *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 35, no. 3 (1996): 199.
37 For a discussion of the conservation of Eat Art artworks, see Claudia María Coronado García, "Can We Use the Concept of Programmed Obsolescence to Identify and Resolve Conservation Issues on Eat Art Installations?" in *Living Matter: The Preservation of Biological Materials in Contemporary Art*, eds. Rachel Rivenc and Kendra Roth (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2022), 39–46.
38 Spoerri, interview by Strenger, "In meiner Kindheit," automatic translation from German.
39 Fernando Domínguez Rubio, "On the Discrepancy Between Objects and Things: An Ecological Approach," *Journal of Material Culture* 2, no. 1 (2016): 65.
40 This line of argumentation aligns with thinking in conservation discourses that suggests, from a temporal perspective, that some artworks may be considered "slow" while others may be considered "fast." See Hanna B. Hölling, "The Aesthetics of Change: On the Relative Durations of the Impermanent and Critical Thinking in Conservation," in *Authenticity in Transition: Changing Practices in Contemporary Art Making and Conservation*, eds. Erma Hermens and Frances Robertson (London: Archetype Publications, 2015), 17; Miller, "Conserving Active Matter and the Historian," in Poh and Miller, *Conserving Active Matter*, 35.
41 Friedrich Tietjen, "The Making of: Multiples," in *Kunst ohne Unikat. Multiple und Sampling als Medium: Techno-Transformationen der Kunst*, ed. Peter Wiebel (Cologne: Walther König, 1999), 82.
42 Jean Tinguely, *Constante Indéterminée* (1959), https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/UNTITLED--CONSTANTE-INDETERMINEE-/0E31D631E850A7CB.

43 For a recent overview of debates in kinetic art, see Rachel Rivenc and Reinhard Bek eds., *Keep It Moving? Conserving Kinetic Art* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 2018).
44 Majda Bejić Jarić and Marta Budicin Munišević, "Encounter with the Father of Op Art, Victor Vasarely: Research in Conservation and Art History, and Conservation Work on the *Barson* Collage," *Journal of Paper Conservation* 24, nos. 3–4 (2023): 91–107.
45 Julian Thomas, *Time, Culture, and Identity: An Interpretative Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 11.
46 Gilbert Simondon, *Individuation in Light of Notions of Form and Information*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 22. For an elaboration of Simondon's hylomorphic critique in philosophical discourses, see also Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 404–15.
47 Simondon, *Individuation*, 21–29.
48 Simondon, *Individuation*, 27.
49 Simondon, *Individuation*, 21–29.
50 Simondon, *Individuation*, 33.
51 Alison Bracker and Alison Richmond, "Introduction," in *Conservation: Principles, Dilemmas and Uncomfortable Truths* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), xvi.
52 Salvador Muñoz Viñas, "The End of Conservation?" *Studies in Conservation* 70, no. 4 (2025): 269, https://doi.org/10.1080/00393630.2024.2370726. Noemie Étienne has recently identified that conservators in European museums increasingly resist the temptation to conceal traces of the past. Noemie Étienne, "Conservation," in *ABC Arts & Musées: Histoire Coloniale et Voix Autochtones*, eds. Sara Petrella and Mylène Steity (Zurich: Seismo Verlag, 2025), 96.
53 Soon Kai Poh, "Conserving Active Matter and the Conservator," in Poh and Miller, *Conserving Active Matter*, 2.
54 On the subjectivity of the decision-making over what is deemed "damage," see Salvador Muñoz Viñas, *Contemporary Theory of Conservation* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2005), 101–4.
55 Muñoz Viñas, *Contemporary Theory*, 81.
56 Muñoz Viñas, *Contemporary Theory*, 65.
57 Muñoz Viñas, *Contemporary Theory*, 65–90.
58 James Elkins, *What Painting Is: How to Think about Oil Painting, Using the Language of Alchemy* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 9.
59 Tim Ingold, "Toward an Ecology of Materials," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): 434.
60 Tim Ingold, "The Textility of Making," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34 (2010): 92.
61 Louise Lawson, Acatia Finbow and Hélia Marçal, "Developing a Strategy for the Conservation of Performance-Based Artworks at Tate," *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* 42, no. 2 (2019): 122.
62 Lawson, Finbow and Marçal, "Developing a Strategy," 122.
63 David Zerbib, "Performing, Participating: The Challenge of Activation," *Critique d'art*, no. 52 (2019): 71–87; Aga Wielocha, "Instilling Liveliness: Archives of Neo-Avant-Garde Art as Sites of Activation," *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* 47, no. 2 (2024): 175.
64 Spoerri, *Edition MAT*.

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