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GEORGE MACIUNAS DBA/FLUXHOUSE COOPERATIVE, INC., OR SOHO : A NEW UTOPIA

20 May 1999 - 2 July 1999

As the faces and activities we have come to associate with Soho change, SUSAN INGLETT is pleased to present an exhibition which documents the birth of Soho as a utopian society and premiere district for the New York avant-garde.

Drawn from the archives of Jonas Mekas, chronicler and key figure in postwar experimental cinema, the exhibition will focus on the efforts of leading Fluxus figure George Maciunas towards organizing the area's first artists' cooperatives.

The exhibition will run from 20 May to 2 July 1999 with an opening reception the evening of Thursday 20 May from 6 PM to 8 PM.

George Maciunas (1931-1978) was a founding member and leader in the development of the 1960's experimental art movement known as Fluxus. Ranging from publishing and performance to a variety of other cooperative activities, members challenged the conventions of artistic media attempting to close the gap between art and life. Maciunas' goals were "Social (not aesthetic)," hoping to "bring the sensibilities of artistic life into the everyday." He worked towards this end in the inexpensive art publications he produced and distributed for himself and Fluxus artists Yoko Ono, George Brecht, Robert Watts, and Nam June Paik among others, as well as in the public performances arranged both in Europe and New York. As an extension of his cooperative activities, in 1966 Maciunas began to establish the Fluxus cooperative studio buildings which would come to define Soho. More than housing alone, Maciunas' utopian vision encompassed collective workshops, food-buying cooperatives, and theaters. The first Fluxhouse was located at 80 Wooster Street, just a few doors down from the Gallery. Maciunas would ultimately convert approximately eighteen buildings throughout Soho, providing affordable space for artists to live and work while establishing a community where art and life might co-exist and become one.

The exhibition will commemorate the early days of Soho through the documents which established the first cooperatives as well as diary entries and notes which record both the successes and failures of cooperative living. People and places will be represented in a variety of stills taken from the films of Jonas Mekas. The exhibition will

also feature a selection of Fluxus objects produced by Maciunas for his neighbors which serve to further illustrate the collective spirit in which Soho was founded.

During the course of the exhibition the City will be petitioned to legally change "Wooster Street" to "George Maciunas Street" in memoriam.

Work will be on view at the gallery located 100 Wooster Street/2 Floor Tuesday to Saturday 11 AM to 6 PM.

For more information contact Susan Inglett at 212/343-0573 and fax 212/343-0574.