

For Immediate Release

Contact
Sofeia Eddy
sofeia.eddy@nyu.edu
212-998-6782

NYU's Grey Art Museum Presents First Comprehensive Retrospective of Alison Knowles

by Alison Knowles: A Retrospective (1960-2022)

September 9, 2026–January 30, 2027

Exhibition Highlights Six-Decade Career of Celebrated American Artist and Founding Member of Fluxus



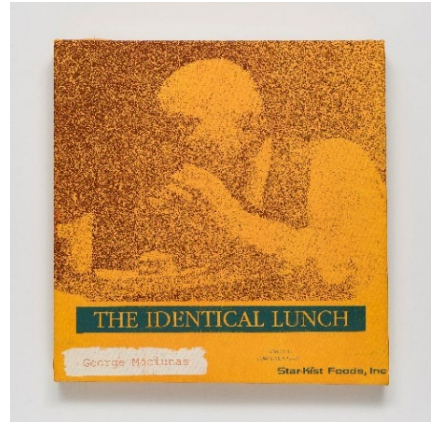
Alison Knowles, *Iliad Oddities (Greene Street)*, 2010. Found objects and cyanotype on cloth, 24 x 108 in.
Courtesy Alison Knowles Studio and James Fuentes, New York

(NEW YORK, NY, July 16, 2026)—This fall the Grey Art Museum at New York University will present *by Alison Knowles: A Retrospective (1960–2022)*, the first comprehensive exhibition of the influential artist's six-decade career. Best known as a founding member of the interdisciplinary art collective Fluxus, Alison Knowles (1933–2025) was an important figure in the avant-garde community for more than half a century, collaborating with George Brecht, John Cage, Charlotte Moorman, Nam June Paik, Robert Watts, Emmett Williams, and many other artists. On view from September 9, 2026, through January 30, 2027, at 18 Cooper Square, the exhibition is accompanied by the first major catalogue to focus on Knowles's life and artistic practice, featuring new research on the artist and the history of Fluxus.

Organized by the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) and guest curated by independent curator Karen Moss, the retrospective includes some two hundred objects that illustrate the monumental scope of Knowles's career from 1960 until her death in 2025. Spanning multiple media—

ranging from painting and printmaking to sculpture, installation, sound art, live performance, poetry, and book art—Knowles's poetic artworks emerged from her extended engagement with ordinary materials, found objects, and everyday life.

The first half of the exhibition is organized chronologically, with a focus on the work Knowles produced during her association with Fluxus, which she helped establish in 1962 and remained involved with through the late 1970s. Knowles's output during this period typified Fluxus's process-oriented approach to radical avant-garde creative production, most notably with her "intermedia" works that combine elements of visual art, written texts or musical scores, and live performance. Many of the live components of these works are represented in the retrospective with historical photographs or other ephemera, including materials from three of Knowles's most notable intermedia projects: *The Big Book* (1966), which expanded an artist-made publication into a monumental installation; *The Identical Lunch* (1967), a performance piece that consisted of Knowles eating the same lunch at the same time for two years, often with colleagues or spectators invited to share the experience; and *The House of Dust* (1969), a poetry project that produced one of the earliest computer-generated poems and was later translated into a public sculpture. The opening section also highlights Knowles's early series of silkscreen-on-canvas paintings, which predate the use of similar production methods by Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg.



Alison Knowles, *George Maciunas Performs the Identical Lunch*, 1968–69, realized 1992. Screen print on canvas, 19 x 18 in. Collection of Hannah B Higgins and Joseph Reinstein. Photo: Robert Chase Heishman



Alison Knowles in her studio, 2012. Photo: Jessica Higgins

The second half of the retrospective presents Knowles's output from the 1970s onward and is organized around an eclectic range of media and materials, including her innovative silkscreen paintings, sound installations, text-based works, and sculptures and musical instruments constructed from unusual materials like beans or flax paper. Specific sections document Knowles's collaborations with other artists on live events over the past twenty-five years, during which she traveled internationally to revisit and reactivate many of her early projects—including one of the earliest food-based works of performance art and perhaps her best-known piece, *Make a Salad*. First performed at London's Festival of Misfits in 1962 and regularly revived thereafter, this iconic work consists of Knowles preparing a massive vegetable salad to the beat of a live musical score and then serving it to the assembled audience.

"Since she first rose to prominence as the sole female co-founder of Fluxus, Alison Knowles has had an astonishingly expansive and productive artistic career at the forefront of the avant-garde movement.

Yet, as for many women of her generation, the extent of her practice has been too long underexamined relative to her male peers," said Moss. "While no single exhibition or publication can do full justice to an artist who worked so prolifically and in so many different modes for more than half a century, this retrospective amplifies Alison's presence in art historical and critical discourse, and brings into sharper relief her prescient contributions to art."

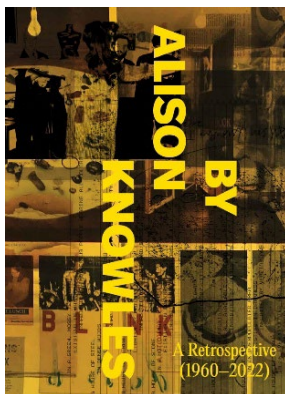
By positioning these early works within the extended trajectory of Knowles's creative practice, *by Alison Knowles*—which derives its title from the artist's 1965 publication of the same name—highlights the recursive and iterative strands that defined her work for decades. Alongside Knowles's artwork and ephemera, the retrospective includes an illustrated timeline that introduces visitors to important milestones in Knowles's life and artistic career. Compiled by the independent curator and scholar Lucia Fabio, this timeline represents the first attempt to construct a detailed narrative of Knowles's life and work.

Alison Weaver, Director, Grey Art Museum noted, "We're honored to feature the experimental work of Alison Knowles, especially given her relationship to downtown Manhattan and NYU's Grey Art Museum. Many of the works on view originated in her SoHo studio; she exhibited and performed at venues in the neighborhood, including her first solo exhibition on East Sixth Street in 1958; and in recent years, she participated in Grey programs such as the "Fluxus Redux" panel in 2011. Her legacy continues through the works themselves and her impact on the next generation of artists."

Tour

Following its original run at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive from July 20, 2022, to February 12, 2023, the exhibition embarked on an extensive international tour: Museum Wiesbaden, Germany: September 20, 2024–January 26, 2025; Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Saint-Étienne, France: November 8, 2025–March 15, 2026; and Nikolaj Kunstahol, Copenhagen: April 25–July 26, 2026. The Grey Art Museum at New York University is the last, and only East Coast venue.

Publication



Cover of *by Alison Knowles: A Retrospective (1960–2022)*

The exhibition *by Alison Knowles: A Retrospective (1960–2022)* is accompanied by the first major book on the artist, which includes groundbreaking new scholarship and writings by historians, artists, and curators focused on Knowles and Fluxus. Co-published by BAMPFA with D.A.P., the fully illustrated publication begins with an introductory essay by Karen Moss that provides an overarching framework for engaging with Knowles's body of work and explains how her contemporary avant-garde practice influenced younger generations of artists. Also included are essays by Nicole Woods, author of *Performing Chance: The Art of Alison Knowles In/Out of Fluxus* (2026); Hannah B. Higgins, a distinguished Fluxus scholar and one of Knowles's twin daughters; and several other distinguished scholars and curators. Also included are reprints of past scholarly essays on Knowles that have had only limited circulation, along with an illustrated chronology of the artist's education, exhibitions, performances, residencies, collaborations, and commemorations.

Sponsorship

by Alison Knowles. A Retrospective (1960–2022) is organized by the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) and curated by Karen Moss. The exhibition is made possible through lead support from the Terra Foundation for American Art and from Dr. Rosalyn M. Laudati and Dr. James Pick. It is also supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.



The presentation at the Grey Art Museum is made possible in part by generous support from the Charina Endowment Fund; the Ann B. Ritt Charitable Foundation; and the Abby Weed Grey Trust.

About the Grey Art Museum

The Grey Art Museum is New York University's fine arts museum, dedicated to advancing knowledge of different cultures, contexts, and histories across time. Over the last five decades, the Grey has organized exhibitions that have encompassed all the visual arts—including painting, sculpture, photography, film, and performance—often traveling to venues in the United States and abroad. As a university museum, the Grey shares NYU's fundamental commitment as a global research university by producing scholarly exhibitions and publications, hosting interdisciplinary public programs, and stewarding the NYU Art Collection and the Abby Weed Grey Collection of Modern Middle Eastern and Asian Art.

General Information

Grey Art Museum, New York University
18 Cooper Square, New York, NY 10003
(Mailing address: 20 Cooper Square, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10003)
Tel: 212-998-6780, Fax: 212-995-4024
E-mail: greyartmuseum@nyu.edu Website: greyartmuseum.nyu.edu

Hours

Tuesday: 11 am–6 pm
Wednesday: 11 am–8 pm
Thursday: 11 am–6 pm
Friday: 11 am–6 pm
Saturday: 11 am–5 pm
Closed Sunday, Monday, and major holidays

Admission

Free admission for the public and NYU community

Press Contact

Sofeia Eddy | sofeia.eddy@nyu.edu | 212-998-6782