

Problems and Provocations

**Grand Arts
1995–2015**

Edited by Stacy Switzer and Annie Fischer

Grand Arts
Kansas City, Missouri

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Front cover: Filip Noterdaeme, *Florence Coyote*, 2006.
(photo: Russell Gera)

Back cover: Pablo Helguera, *Juvenal Merst*, “*Work Number
11 (Against the Critics)*,” 2001, 2009. Spring 1999 issue of
October, nitrous oxide (laughing gas), humidifier, wood;
dimensions variable.

Endpapers (front): annotated project material from Anthony
Baab’s *A Strenuous Nonbeing*, 2013.

Endpapers (back): project schematic for William Pope.L’s
Trinket, 2008. (design: E.J. Holland)

Pages 6–7: John Salvest, installation process view, *IOU/USA*,
2011. Shipping containers, 59 ½ x 120 x 40 ft.

Pages 8–9: The Propeller Group, process detail, *The AK-47
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^ Alfredo Jaar, video still, *Muxima*, 2005. Digital video with sound, 36 min.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

Muxima, Villa Medici, Rome (2005)
Muxima, Galería Oliva Arauna, Madrid (2006)
Muxima, Galerie Lelong, New York (2006)
Muxima, Reina Sofia, Madrid (2006)
Muxima, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona (2006)
Muxima, MAMCO, Geneva (2006)
Muxima, Cultural Centre of Belém, Lisbon (2007)
Alfredo Jaar: Politics of the Image, South London Gallery, London (2008)
Muxima, La Marrana, Montemarcello, Italy (2009)
Muxima, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia (2011)
Muxima, Art Institute of Chicago (2011)
Alfredo Jaar: Muxima, San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, California (2014)



^ Alfredo Jaar, video still, *Muxima*, 2005. Digital video with sound, 36 min.

Rosemarie Fiore Good-Time Mix Machine: Scrambler Drawings Sept. 3–Oct 23, 2004



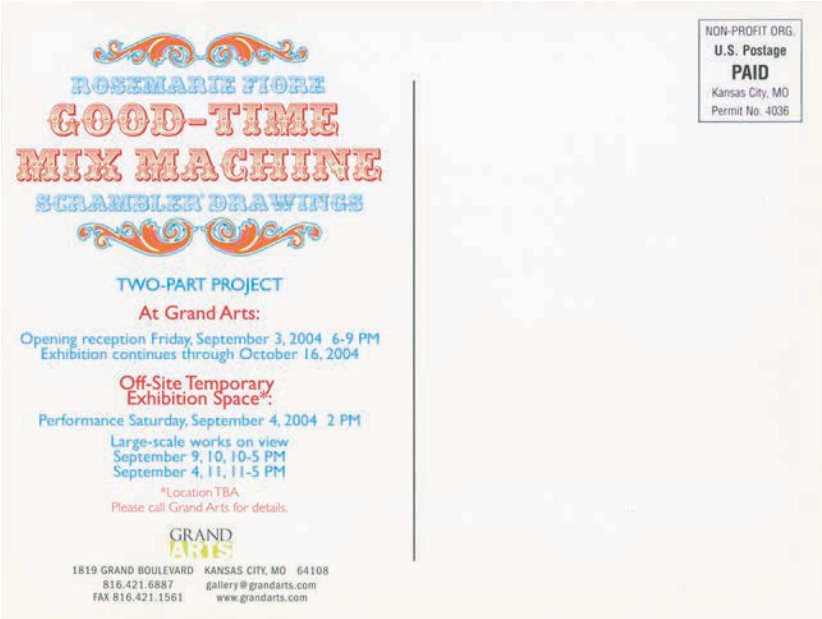
By and large, we do not associate the work of serious artists with out-and-out fun. When art addresses technologies of pleasurable distraction, for instance, they are often undermined; such subversion is what makes the work “serious.” And that’s fine, given how often our distractions could stand some thoughtful interrogation. But with *Good-Time Mix Machine: Scrambler Drawings*, Rosemarie Fiore pushed fun-mechanics in a different direction—and the results were a blast.

As her principal tool, Fiore appropriated an unlikely mechanism: the 1964 Eli Bridge Scrambler, an amusement ride familiar to attendees of elaborate theme parks or humble county fairs. This rather cunning contraption spins riders on two axes. A central mechanism moves one direction, suspending clusters of carriages from three arms; these clusters spin on another axis, in the opposite direction. As David Hunt writes in his brochure essay, the appeal of such rides is tied up in “a sense of imminent danger.” There’s an implicit trust that this machine won’t *really* kill you. Yet the visceral and unavoidable sense of physical risk is a good example of what makes “fun” a more complicated, more engaging experience than, say, “joy.” Joy somehow seems acceptable, necessary, perhaps deserved. Fun can be ambiguous, even potentially dangerous ... and ultimately more seductive.

→



^ Rosemarie Fiore, process view, *Scrambler Drawing*, 2004. Acrylic on vinyl, 60 x 60 ft.



^ Exhibition postcard, *Good-Time Mix Machine: Scrambler Drawings*, 2004.

“Amusement parks, even more than your standard Ringling Bros. road show, loom large in the cultural hard drive of nearly all children. ... Whether you first went as a shy second grader and rode a top-hatted caterpillar through Mother Goose Land, or heroically tried to impress your first love by winning a purpose dinosaur in the ring toss, the point is you were there. It was the party that everyone got invited to and no one missed.”

David Hunt, *Good-Time Mix Machine: Scrambler Drawings* brochure essay, 2004



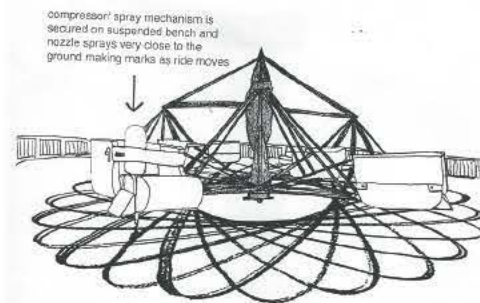
< Scrambler-scouting by the artist, 2004.

[RF] Before I create drawings with these machines, I study how they work (including reading the manuals) and how they are normally used in our society. I then turn them into drawing machines.

Excerpt from artist proposal to Grand Arts, February 2004

Fiore's practice has regularly entailed scrambling the functions of things, from lawnmowers to firecrackers, and *Good-Time Mix Machine: Scrambler Drawings* demonstrated her fluency in creatively misusing objects and technologies. Today we'd call it "hacking"—but it has long been a universally understood variety of fun. Fiore outfitted her Scrambler with a gas generator and an air compressor, engineered to spray bucketsful of paint downward from a spinning carriage as the ride made its dizzying circuit. The resulting mechanized-action paintings (huge and satisfying looped patterns, recorded on hunks of vinyl, canvas, and paper) were installed at Grand Arts, along with process videos. Fiore and Grand Arts also demonstrated her art-making Scrambler in a Kansas City warehouse—allowing spectators to experience in person the aesthetic pleasure previously hidden in this geometry of thrills.

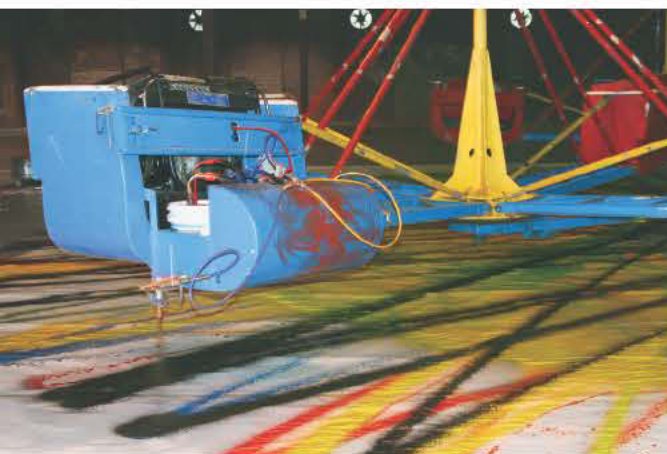
Fiore compared her Scrambler paintings to the visuals that result from using a Spirograph, the classic geometric-drawing toy, and perhaps this evocation of a familiar-to-many childhood object is telling. Making art is a natural pleasure up to the age when we become aware of others' judgments, at which point a line is drawn between those who persist and the majority who do not. In borrowing a machine, then, that so directly evokes the exhilarating pleasures of childhood, Fiore made a seriously fun decision. What a ride. [RW]



^ Spray mechanism diagram included in artist proposal to Grand Arts, 2004.



^ Documentation of Scrambler car outfitted with custom spray mechanism, 2004.



^ Documentation of Scrambler car outfitted with early version of spray mechanism, 2004.



Rosemarie Fiore, *Scrambler Drawing*, 2004. > Acrylic on vinyl, 60 x 60 ft. Ed. 1/2 unique pieces.

[SS] The process of making these paintings was really quite dangerous. We all agreed it wasn't safe for anybody to ride our Scrambler, despite the temptation of having the ride all to ourselves in a corner of a 200,000-square-foot warehouse in a sweltering Kansas City summer. The danger that wasn't as obvious until the team got started was that somebody would need to manually switch the paint sprayers on and off while the ride was running at full speed. Slower speeds would distort the image, and incorrect timing would affect the color pattern. This meant that Rosemarie and project manager Nate Shay would bolt on foot into the path of the moving ride to strike the sprayer's "on" button, and then tear out of its orbit to get out of the way. There had been earlier discussion of a remote-controlled triggering system, but by the time we knew what we needed, the clock was ticking on our stay in the warehouse.



BEHIND THE SCENES

"I would collaborate with local technicians and engineers in Kansas City to create three spray mechanisms that would be secured to the seats, one on each of the three arms. The spray mechanism's nozzle would be attached to the bottom of its seat about six inches from the ground. Each mechanism would be no heavier than the weight limit for each seat, thus the ride would run safely and remain in balance, keeping level with the ground."

Rosemarie Fiore, excerpt from artist proposal, February 2004



"There were problems with getting the paint to spray; the manufacturer's nozzle tips didn't work. Eventually the shop designed a custom extended nozzle tip that got the paint closer to the paper."

Sometimes there are 'over-thinking' moments in the shop, when the solution is arrived at by going back to square one and the simplicity of the original idea."

Nathan Shay, as told to Summer Farrar, June 2015



< Rosemarie
Fiore, process
documentation,
*Good-Time
Mix Machine:
Scrambler
Drawings*, 2004.



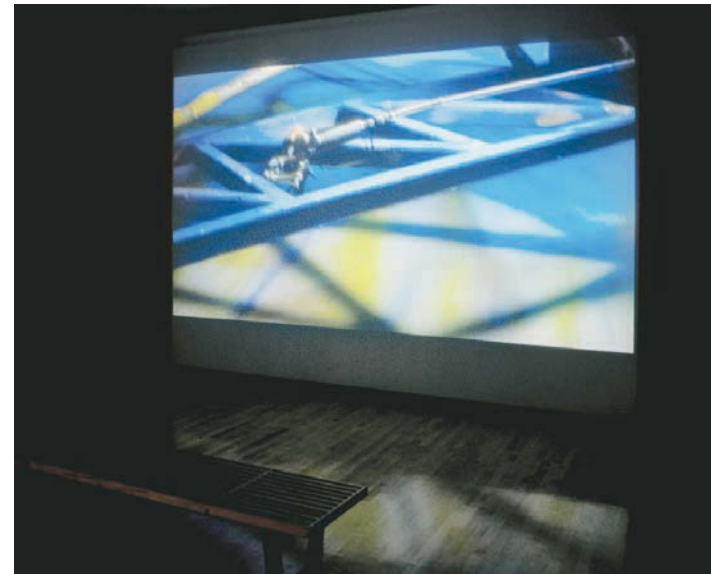
< Rosemarie Fiore, installation view, *Scrambler Drawing*, 2004. Acrylic on vinyl, 48 x 48 ft.



< Rosemarie Fiore, process view, *Scrambler Drawings*, 2004. Acrylic on paper; 4 panels, each 120 x 48 in. Collection of Brad Nicholson, Kansas City.



^ Rosemarie Fiore, detail, *Scrambler Drawing* preparatory sketch, 2004. Ink on paper, 12 x 12 in. Ed. 1/25 unique pieces.



^ Rosemarie Fiore, installation view, *Good-Time Mix Machine*, 2004. DVD, 4:27 min.

From: Rosemarie Fiore
Subject: Re: Materials for the Grand Arts Book
Date: Sat, Aug 22, 2015 at 7:54 AM
To: Summer Farrar <summer@grandarts.com>

Hi Summer,

Thanks for your email. I've got great news- I am in Buffalo planning with the Albright Knox Art Gallery to have the Scrambler Project revisited next summer as public art works throughout the city of Buffalo and surrounding area. It's been quite exciting to update, expand and revamp the project. [...]

All Best,
Rosemarie

