

How to Make Happenings Happen

A disembodied voice boomed out of the Maccarone gallery in the West Village one Saturday evening last fall. "Forget all the standard art forms," it intoned. "The point is to make something new. Something that doesn't even remotely remind you of culture." The voice—belonging to the late Allan Kaprow—emanated from a stack of 100 radios: clock radios, stereo receivers, and one pink Disney model. They were all tuned to the same station and piled in the gallery's foyer.



The CD release party for Allan Kaprow's *How to Make a Happening*, 1966, at New York's Maccarone gallery.

The broadcast doubled as a CD release party for Kaprow's *How to Make a Happening* (1966), reissued by Primary Information, a publisher of artists' books, and available for \$16 at primaryinformation.org. The organizers, Primary Information cofounders James Hoff and Miriam Katzeff, scoured junk shops for receivers for the event, titled "How to Make a Happening for 100 Radios."

On the recording Kaprow reads his instructions for staging spontaneous acts of art. In

"Soap" he tells participants to cover their partners' naked bodies with jam and bury them in the sand at a beach, watching until the tide washes them clean. He is also explicit about how not to make a Happening: "Don't paint pictures, don't make poetry, don't build architecture, don't arrange dances, don't write plays, don't compose music, don't make movies," he says. "And above all, don't think you'll get a Happening out of putting all these together." —Sarah P. Hanson