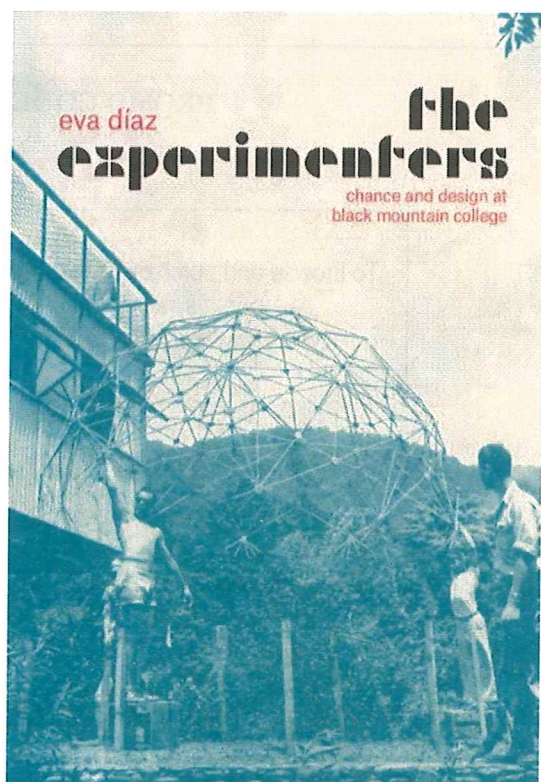


# THE EXPERIMENTERS

CHANCE AND DESIGN AT BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Eva Díaz

In *The Experimenters*, Eva Díaz reveals the full artistic importance of Black Mountain College—and especially of three key teachers, Josef Albers, John Cage, and R. Buckminster Fuller. Offering a bold, compelling new angle on some of the most widely studied creative figures of modern times, *The Experimenters* does nothing less than rewrite the story of art in the mid-twentieth century.



“Terrific. Black Mountain College has long been a lodestone for those interested in alternative educational models and in artistic innovation. Nevertheless, the major historical literature on the College still rests on largely anecdotal histories, with a tendency to jaunty optimism in lieu of criticality. There is nothing quite like *The Experimenters* out there—not on Black Mountain College, not on art making, and not on pedagogy.”

*Judith Rodenbeck, Sarah Lawrence College*

“By parsing three different versions of experimentation—performed by Josef Albers, John Cage, and Buckminster Fuller—Díaz shows us how their individual efforts were part of a shared commitment to art’s capacity to reinvent the world, to alter how we see, experience, and shape it in our own image. In the name of experimentation each of the artists suspended, if only for a moment, the metrics of failure and success, and replaced them instead with the values of intellectual pleasure, expanded sensory experiences, and aesthetic innovation. While the book is undoubtedly a historical account of a particular time and place, it is also a road map for many paths that, while not taken, still remain open.”

*Helen Molesworth, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles*

“In this highly evocative and well-executed study, Díaz explores the innovative pedagogical practices that were developed at Black

Mountain College in its heyday. Respectful of the distinct teaching methods of the College’s most notable faculty, Díaz nonetheless finds a common experimental basis to the artworks and inventions produced by their students in the late 1940s and early 1950s. *The Experimenters* is nuanced, erudite, and intellectually wide-ranging. It will be essential reading for anyone interested in the development of mid-twentieth-century art in the United States.”

*Alexander Alberro, author of Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*

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