

## APPENDIX E

## “INSIDER” PLEXUS PAPERS

Aaron Barr

Transcript of the interview made in New York, in November, 1994.

Plexus for me is an art spiritual journey.

What I placed inside the Plexus Magic Box is something that reflects the teaching of my master Baba Mutananda who does not belong to any particular religion but following his own spiritual path through the chakri recognized our universal relation with the world.

The Plexus Magic Box is a multi-cultural event. With some Plexus memorabilia and other materials belonging to me, I created, inside the box a Plexus universe, something that told a story about the unseen world of Plexus and of its spiritual path/journey, on different levels and places, in which I got involved. I let the material to go together as in a collage.

What I experienced was a universal love which as a universal message I understood to be in the end the ultimate message of Plexus of reconciliation through art.

I remember vaguely the USA Club Plexus event with the serpent around the magic box.

I can describe my experience with Plexus Black Box as a multicultural event with so many different elements and the swimming pool event at CUANDO in 1988 was an example of it.

Plexus can be described only in action where all people go together in action and not as a theory or a thought. Plexus acts upon its art goals of reconciliation and love among all people of the world.

The most significant element in Plexus is that its events by itself are actions of reconciliation in reality and not just theoretical statements. What they are about is to bring people together of various cultures with different ways of life under one roof so we can experience that we are one.

Plexus has its own way to achieve this reconciliation goal through art and to bring philosophy in practice, this is way the events in Plexus are more important than the theory of it. Without them, Plexus remained just as an idea.

From an unpublished paper Plexus Magic Box, New York, June 1994.

The Plexus Magic Box is a multi-cultural event. The box which eventually became the Magic Box was given to me to use in an artwork of my choice by

a friend who is a known world traveller who had brought the box all the way from Asia to New York City. It sat empty for two years amongst a vast variety of objects one amasses as a constructionist and collage artist. Waiting until one day when in conversation with Dr. Dernini the idea arose to construct a “Magic Box” to represent Plexus. I had been working on a series of magic boxes for five years. All in their own way representing an aspect of the inner journey, exactly what the world of Plexus represented to me. Through Dr. Dernini’s great passion for Plexus, in time I came to understand much of the formation and on-going concepts of Plexus as well as Dr. Dernini’s vision for the future accomplishments he hoped Plexus would achieve.

These many conversations formed the “material” I used to create the Plexus Magic Box 1.

As you study the box you will recognising that you are looking at a Plexus universe made up of memorabilia from Plexus events as well as material metaphors for the artistic and spiritual journey we are all undertaking on some level.

Here lies my reason for placing Swami Muktananda, one of the greatest spiritual leaders of the last half of the twenty century, at the pinnacle of this boxed universe. He is there, as he was here, for one reason which is to remind us of our own nature and that we are in truth one.

It is my clear understanding that this is also the message that Dr. Dernini, through Plexus, has put into action by endeavouring to “heal and reconcile” all cultures through the common denomination of art.

Fabrizio Bertuccioli

Written recollection made in Rome, in July of 1994

On my participation in PLEXUS International I had just started again to work very heavily in the field of visual arts and I was trying to create a group of artists gathered around the same operative lines, that is: liberation of artists from the cage of the art market, direct taking over of the 'intellectual' responsibility for one's own work, re-establishing of a link between art and culture (rather than the consumer-like attitude of the star system), 're-invention of the locations of art', and the making in the first person. I was working on a wide area making use of various channels and especially involving those artists who, though very good and lively, had no place inside the 'official' circles. In 1986, together with a quite large group of artists which called itself 'Magazzini Generali' (Bonded Warehouse), I was organizing the 'Project Against Apartheid', when we received, through the connections established during the task at hand, namely through Dr. Sandro Dernini, the invitation to participate in the PLEXUS event 'Il serpente di Pietra' (The stone snake), which was to take place in Sardinia. Among the working papers sent from New York, I found enclosed some pages from the

'Fire' magazine, published in the U.S.A. around the twenties, which I found to be of great interest with respect to the problems of contemporary artists, and very close to the spirit of our own operation. Therefore, I decided to participate in 'The stone snake' event, i.e. four days of art and science, The international market of art slaves (Gavoi, July 1987).

From the first PLEXUS papers I read and the first meetings with people involved in it, I realized that, according to me, this project is very much on the same line of what we are trying to do, offering, in addition, wider and structurally more advanced operative conditions, relying on an already developed international global strategy, with its own history, and with passwords synthesizing concepts which are essential for the freedom to express, research, and communicate. I realized that working together with PLEXUS could give us the possibility to give voice to a force capable, if not of solving, at least of raising the problem of a different relationship between art and society, thus re-negotiating 'the art contract'. Moreover, PLEXUS gives us the advantage of tools such as the 'art co-opera', which enables artists and scientists from different places and with different backgrounds to contact each other for a limited period of time in creative situations with the aim of producing a tangible result. This promotes a high-level interaction from which new life sparks, new seeds and new fruits are born to the advantage of a re-discovered 'International Community' of artists in the first person.

These are, in short, the reflections which led to my active participation and first-person initiative in the PLEXUS project (see papers, events, and works produced).

I must say, however, that in the course of time I've often had reasons to consider some risks connected to the PLEXUS internal dynamics, which, in fact, often shows the same negative trends against which the whole project had initially come into being: that is, repeated tendencies to turn the project to personal, egoistic advantage, and mean power games resulting in the fact that happenings originally created by PLEXUS have wound up appearing under a different label (often that of some Establishment institution); all things which clearly emerge from a careful inspection of the documents. The worst thing, however, is the persistence of a discriminatory attitude towards artists, who are often relegated to an accessory, ornamental role in the context of the most relevant happenings. This emerges clearly from the fact that artists have no access to the economical budget and have to participate at their own expense, while, on the contrary, other participants - whether professors, scientists, intellectuals, managers, or representatives of this or that institution - come to carry on their businesses at the organization's expense. I won't, however, attempt any analysis or de-construction of what PLEXUS has produced in the recent years, this task being up to researchers in fields different from mine (critics, historians). My concern is art making, with the consciousness that this will become increasingly difficult insofar as the snake keeps biting its own tail.

Translation by the author of his paper in Plexus International Manifesto Chiamata Aperta per gli Schiavi dell'Arte (Open Call for the Slaves of Art), made by Bertuccioli, Rome, June 1988.

The Artist in the First Person,

The creation of autonomous organisms of artists who are producers in the first person of their works is one of current research project pursued by the artistic movement and the international "community" of artists in the everyday organization of their work (see PLEXUS and the informal autonomous movements working in various countries).

Withdrawing in order to exchange

The social composition of a freely composed world is a behavioural system that relates the homogeneous and the heterogeneous.

The homogeneous is the world of industrial production, wherein economy is the model which determines relationships. The production of exchange is therein reduced to zero and a loss of possible values is determined, the model imposing itself on the heterogeneous through a refusal to communicate which create marginality and impoverishment.

Withdrawing, getting estranged from that model, is an attempt to turn this poverty into wealth. Art as the realm of "gratuitous" is the invention of possibilities of free withdrawal and the production of acts, events, objects, etc.... through which an exchange is reinvented between unrelated and heterogeneous spheres, that of the useful and that of the useless (play).

The reinvention of exchange between these spheres, the re-establishing of a relationship between homogeneous and heterogeneous, allows us to identify values which are necessary for the survival of any civilization.

This is the work engaged in by artists as utopian producers of the "gratuitous," a work for which too often they have to pay the price. To deny marginality as a chance for enriching the exchange between those heterogeneous who withdraw from the dominant homogeneous, to propose an attitude toward the programming and production of projects which actually amount to denying the chance itself, is a crime against freedom and against a freely composed world, before than a crime against creativity and art.

Reinventing the locations of art is an operative element in this marginality.

When one sees a piece of art in a place that is already "valorized," in a place already assigned to art, everything one sees acquires "authority," becomes important, and exchange becomes impossible. When, instead, one sees it simply just like that, in an ordinary place, without the prop of the 'appropriate' place and surroundings, one finds it easier to criticize, one is forced into a relationship with it. It is the capacity to perceive normality as opposed to the expectation of an extraordinary event, which, in most the cases, is just a prefabricated display.

The production of use value consists in the attribution of sense to the world of signs and objects which man produces for man (play).

Art is where it is, not what it is

Why is man an exemplary citizen as long as he lives in noise, but becomes a rebel as soon as he sets about listening to himself?

The live TV news becomes the only acknowledged reality in the world.

The individual must make himself fitting and predictable if he hopes for a place in a world where every fantasy has found its justification.

An event is accepted only if its presentation cancels the risks that preceded it. Since art in itself is experiment and research, it is the attest way to experiment and research in any field (it is the natural place for such activities).

The artist as research scientist must become the critic of fame.

Artistic production must be capable of doing away with 'the opposition between wealth and poverty,' the opposition between the abstract and the concrete in the human condition.

Whoever engages in art-making has to adopt toward the present time the attitude implied by the concept of the artistic work's gratuitousness. Art is the "need to exercise humanity" without hoping for fame, without falling into worry about the future and into anxiety to succeed, to grow attached to a piece of work, to suffer the limitations of reason, to lose sight of life.

An attitude of gratuitous expense is the first form taken by the imagination of wealth, its source, while giving up living, storing, and saving up are its contrary.

The artist today mustn't work for the 'art business' only, mustn't make use of his imagination only in the making of his work. He has to use it also in his everyday life, determining new relationships which are coherent with his spirit, with his inner life, thus accepting other people's creative energies as well as his own. Only starting from a way of making which is not ruled by the laws of the production of goods, which is beyond the condition imposed by a culture that models every human activity on economy, and that on this model has moulded every form of production, invention, communication, socialization, and formation of personal identity, only starting from a way of making which is gratuitous from the point of view of these laws it will become possible to re-invent the 'location of art.' Only starting from this condition it will become possible to identify a new wealth which is unity inside the person between bodily and spiritual being and unity among people, and to imagine the life of a society which is free from fear and freely composed. Then, maybe, something will be born that we could feel like calling art.

It is thus necessary that artists, 'withdrawing,' work in first person as producers of themselves and of their own projects, grouping themselves into a society in which each artist is present with his own identity, his own credit line, and his own product, giving body to the heterogeneous which invites

dialogue with the homogeneous (which would like art to be industrial production and the artist a follower of orders: star system) on the results of the ongoing and ever changing research, thus setting in motion a dynamics of behaviours and relationships from which new life sparks. It would be the first time in history that the homogeneous and the heterogeneous were not in a relationship of conflict, of mutual elimination, and everything deriving from that, and this is valid and extendible to all fields where those human relations operate which determine the life of society.

If this were to happen, historically it would amount to the end of the civilization of barbarism, the extinction of the sense of guilt, the disappearance of the fear of being like what one rejects, which is often identified, in fact, with the heterogeneous.

This is today the historic task of artists in the first person and of those who have been able to keep alive and foster the being, and who have had the luck not to mistake it with the having.

In this spirit came into being a Plexus photo event by the international community of artists in the first person working in New York, Amsterdam, Paris, Rome, Cagliari, Dakar, to further freedom of association and expression for the international community of art.

David Boyle

Unpublished paper *La Scatola Nera (Black Box)*, Rome, 1989.

At the finish of July we commence a comforting phase of auto-analysis that is made possible by the relative confinement of the Plexus movement within the scattola nera (black box). The confinement is accomplished by utilizing the material residue of the movement that we call documentation in a ritual manner.

Until this decisive moment/action the Plexus movement was following the traditional path into history, but by this action which constitutes an intervention in the process, we choose our point from which to address history. The traditional path included a gradual abandonment of active interest in the movement. By utilizing the metaphor of planetary mass we could understand the evacuation of the most heavy elements from the core of the body (mass) results in an instability that necessitates a collapse of the body to re-establish the core mass. Rather than to wrack the body of this movement with such a change of structure, we have intervened to freeze the movement in time through the use of ritual documentation. The core group is stabilized by this action.

Founding members of the movement cited dissatisfaction with the shift within the movement away from new ideas. The action taken by the remaining elements of the movement to place the movement in a sort of stasis to facilitate analysis represents a sort of retrospective consensus.

Gaetano Brundu

Transcript of the Italian written recollection made by him in Cagliari, in July-August 1994.

Plexus has often given the impression of escaping from the system of art and its codes of communication. So therefore it is difficult to identify its relationships with the problematics of contemporary art. If we can find the problem and if we can see at which level of involvement and understanding, we can distinguish between objective and subjective relationships. Furthermore Plexus is widely innovative (but is it?), the problem can be rather finding what distinguishes the surrounding environment, so we need to define the intrinsic characteristics. And for this reason I think that it is still not arrived the time, because to close Plexus in a label it is to declare its end. Or would be only the end of its evolving age? This can be something we can think about over the next few months.

There is still the fact, rather evident, that many manifestations of Plexus express themselves in a sense of inadequateness, a sort of unprotected lackness compare with the communication in act within the system of art. A little like as a ship of fools, like a ballon without a rutter going around the sky. But this can be the element that gives its originality. In this fragile and instable limit between folly and geniuss, between instinct and historical awareness, between excellent flights and falls to the levels of jerks or of pigs, it has played in the defining the destiny and identity of Plexus.

I believe that I have already said in the letter to Mazzarely made in May 1992: Plexus can be charatherized and have its originality, in the very system of art it has been so often excluded from because of the lack of the responsibility of some of the players or by choice, or anyway objective placement; characterized by its diversity.

Its exit from the system could be important. But how many people are aware about it? How many see the methodological necessity in it?

Somebody maight fall back often into the temptation of finding a way to get in to the system, a way to "success;" and this is what I meant before about the jerks.

To exit from the system could be a methodological tool ( and it can be also a praxis) that can modify and help Plexus grow in reference to the same system; and in the final analysis it could help that same system grow.

If I have to make a reference for Plexus about the problematics of contemporary art, I wouldn't even know which components to exactly mention. We could speak about "Ephemeral Art," Narrative Art ; but also visionary sensibility, that is a characterization that is not only contemporary. In the history of Plexus there is a lot of Conceptual Art but it is only a component part.

And so: what can we connect the metaphor of Plexus Art Cooperas and of other events? to the Carneval in Rio? Or furthermore: what sense does it have to attribute, to what connect the frequent jumps of sloppy and irrational acts, at the limits of craziness? to the first Dada?

Plexus produces the event but produces also the object, that which in the Storage we called relics.

Certainly Plexus has been quite inclined towards " the event;" characterized by ( it seems to me) escape from reason by some of the players.

Lively dialectics, therefore, between program and unleashed fantasy or anyway not disciplined, free fantasy in a way from potential rules and methodological rigors conditioning its program and selfdisciplin.

What reveals in my works? I think that I sway to find an equilibrium between my various personal experiences, a kind a virtual synthesis outside single episodes. But could it or should it be a kind of virtual thing, a thing which was only mine and that can not be communicated easily. In my work there is the object - the drawings, but also little white pieces of papers, there was the concept - "The Mystery of Interleukine 2", "the Ghost of Liberty", the event - installations, but rarely actions. I have also a global perception of these experiences, and I did not live them as comparisons and irreconcilables, admitted that this reconciliation was a problem. There was some need of mediating, there was so to survive that moment of a deep subjective equilibrium, that idea and that synthesis that rest inside of me; and I did not know how to define differently.

Anyway, to know if and how Plexus would confronted itself with the particular problem of contemporary art, for me up till now wasn't a question that concerned me. It is a problem, I wish to say that for the moment I put it in parenthesis. Now I see it like a lazy game with labels. Personally I am not interested in looking for or finding feedbacks. I have been interested and still am interested in establishing a relationship between my work and my globality as an artist in the first person and this open situation, magmatics, as if I had in front of me an identity to inseminate. I am interested in this projection toward the future, toward the creation of something that did not exist before in the system of art. But to define it is like killing it.

I thought, and I think to be able to contribute by giving a soul to this collective process by bringing my story inside, the story of my 30 year relationship with the system of art.

So do not think that the moment has come to look for feedbacks and definitions in particular categories and tendencies. This is at least my position today. Maybe it is too subjective, but I believe that it may fit into a program. You speak of a sinking. After years of happy and uncounscious sailing, it was inevitable that the ship of fools would crash against some rocks or paradoxically would go down in a calm sea. It doesn't seem that this ship at the level of unconsciousness has come across many of the problematics which dominate the system of art today. Certainly, there were be also some convergences, objective not conscious. This uncounsciousness could have constituted its salvation up to the point of going down but sinking is not sinking, but a renewal and a regeneration. The ship of fools is like "l'Araba Fenice." But you can say that the uncounsciousness, the ignorance of the rocks has consolidated the non existence of the rocks, therefore, "The Zen and of the art of not sinking," it is a book that hasn't been written yet. can Plexus write it? Regarding the serie dedicated to the molecular image of Interleukine 2 I believe necessary an introduction. An introduction which began in 1962, when my first work from the serie of "Leoni" was made. It was in this work where for the first time that emblem now known as "Baffo" (moustache) of the lion, by Brundu) still present today in my work. In that "Leone I" from 1962 ( oil on canvas, kept at the Institute of Art History in the Letters School, University of Cagliari) in the center of the snout there was a kind of little anchor or vague phallic symbol. The work depicts a lion's head and originated from a gesture, a quick brush of color in which I made in a moment of "improvisation." Do you see? we come back to that which could have taught us Jazz: the role of improvisation in the genesis of the work of art. I thought that have expressed in that painting the sign of a pregerminal force, the essence of vitality. In those years I was already aware of the problematics related to psychoanalysis, I saw my product was solidly anchored in Freudian dream symbols.

In the middle of the 80's came the encounter with the Interleukine 2 or better with the image of its molecular model elaborated in the laboratories of the University of Paris VI and published in the montly French journal "La Recherche" in the May 1986. That image, made by Rimsky e Norris, represents one of the plausible configurations of the IL2 (Interleukine 2) in the space.

It began like that in 1986 my serie of copy art that you know and that in part you felt to use for your research. The image of that model of IL2 I have put next that of my "baffo," they have interacted in various ways in my pages, cm 30x21, the same dimensions, the same kind of little pieces of papers used for

the installations, using combinations, and successive reductions, games of collage and added marks. The general title of my operation was the same title of the article of “La Recherche:” Les Messagers de l’Immunité.

I was intrigued enough by those images very similar to mine, “il baffo,” that appears suddenly on the panorama of science, connected to the mechanisms of immunity that are inner most mechanisms in defence of the organism. Also there a sign of strong vitality that I believe is at the bottom of the mystery of life and of the survival of beings and of species. The mystery of my fantasy solidified, the animal pregerminal vitality and the intimate defence found themselves in my creative work, in my fantasy over a distance of years.

From an other side I was intrigued by the same mystery that took care of the genesis of certain forms and images, the encounter between gesture from which was born my first “baffo” and the systematic methodology of scientific research that brought me the “plausible” model of that molecule.

So my problem, as an artist in the first person, a solitary artist but a careful one, ( so I believe), to what was happening in the world, in that of effects and of dreams, particularly in that of science that in certain moments I do not know in which part to connect myself, between reality and fantasy.

The problem tied to the mystery of genesis of forms, but also of a questioning of its subtle links to life that unify in time and space, aspects and ways of the existing which usually look without any connections between them.

Naturally, as artist, neither this time did I feel bound to illustrate a theorem or some laws given prior or outside from my specific creativity; I was interested to go ahead with a process, an artistic process without even knowing the outcome. In this process intervened my way, also technical, to be an artist, the formal consolidated and fine games made over ten years above all through drawings, the consciousness of my particular collocation within the system of art. As an example of a drawing I can remember that “Flight and Flights” that you know well because in 1976? we used for the poster of the concert of Scelsi that you organized at Spazio A.

Therefore those two images, il “baffo” and IL2 interacted in the context of my drawing, and those marks derived from the quick gesture, from the sense of space that put in act familiar dynamics to me; they interacted with my history as an artist and with the intent of creating works of art, of constructing a new universe, of rhythms, of forms and sensibility.

English translation by the author of his paper For Plexus, published in Passport for Plexus Serpent, Cagliari, Celt Edition, 1987.

The artists and intellectuals' cosmopolitanism is an ancient aspiration often mortified by poverty, by tiredness, by mistrust in humanity and by the melancholic condition of those live in islands and little islands. And yet the planet is today really a village.

Communication networks more and more are becoming frequent and punctual: making to circulate our own ideas, our dreams, even in shape of work of art, of proposal, of questioning, is today virtually easy and speedy. So, for artists in the first person, Plexus may become the net of which we little in despair far inhabitants of islands can vibrate the yarns for radiate our creative messages, in hope that such messages don't get lost in a desert of indifference.

Plexus may become an important opportunity for those who feel themselves somehow creative and, as artists in the first person, feel the need to throw their message to this net; message that is going to be much more than a bottle entrusted to the ocean streams.

From the art exhibition announcement Plexus Storage Calls NYC, Cagliari, 1992.

The Third Plexus International Storage installation, Storage Calls NYC, opened June 13, 1992, will end September 15. It is an operation in progress: begun with objects by George Chaikin, Ivan Dalla Tana, David Boyle, Alfa Diallo, Leonard Horowitz, Lorenzo Pace, Rolando Politi and Barnaby Ruhe, it is gone on with insert of Carol Black, Nilde Cortez, Steven Di Lauro, Ralston Farina, Ray Kelly, Arturo Lindsay, Patricia Parker, William Parker, Wess Power, José Rodriguez and others.

This call on New York City precedes fourth installation, Multiples, by Antonello Dessì and follows Plexus Imprinting, A Story by Anna Saba; first installation of the Storage was Opening, fitted by Fabrizio Bertuccioli, Piero Cianflone, Ciro Ciriaco and Sandro Dernini.

This Act Three, of which I assume the whole responsibility, may be the first in a line of call other Plexonian centers: but New York is New York, it is a little the mother house, a house who is imaginary of homeless to, virtual as some artistic reality and our own existential reality, virtual, is more real than real. This call NYC is recall, is the continuity of a poetic dialogue living for several years, it founds on some objects produced by plexonians of New York, relics of Plexus history. From those objects and from their interaction with other relics kept in the Storage, originates a production of images, poetic tensions in a ephemeral and virtual space, built at the moment in the view finder of the reflex; so the photographs constitute the work of art, the work produced by theirs installation of the Storage.

In side of decayed and entangled space of San Francesco al Corso in Cagliari, ideally struggling with barbarous and barbaric intrusions of the present and past, struggling with darkness and profusely laid down entropy will, the relics of some stories happened in NYC during memorable evenings, suggest new adventures for creative fancy, another trip amongst thousand real and virtual

trips that are possible on the yarn of Plexus network, net that vibrates in known and known canvasses, from the more subtle, rational and lucid to the craziest and ricketiest.

George Chaikin

Transcript of the interview made at Angiola Churchill's loft, New York, November 1994.

It is difficult for collaborative art group endeavours to have space in old traditional exhibitions where only one person get usually credit as the creator. Recently there is a move towards more democratic forms where all people are participating in the making decisions process.

My initial understanding of Plexus Black Box through my participation, made by the art work, the Haddamard Matrix retina, a device for image compression, for reducing information, was to facilitate face to face communications among artists all over the world. Then I realized that my art work in Plexus were used by other artists, like Gaetano Brundu and Maria Grazia Medda, as a foundation for the growing of collaborative development. My feeling of Plexus Black Box is that there is a continuous shift of what is in the box and why. I believe that its' relevance was more related with whom in that moment was participating and from the circumstances. My participation was made not under any hierarchy, because it switches always in time and space. I believed that I never was a key player. I participated without understanding what I was doing with the belief that others were understanding. Over years, as the process recurs, in retrospect, I began to understand what was happening. Sometimes I did not know what and why something was happening but, later on, it made sense. The Plexus process is a non linear activity and is less rational, in which the coherence appears only after the fact. After my experience over the years I know that there is not a need to get every "i" dotted and cross every "t" in terms of understanding it. This is because you will understand it only after you let yourself participate in it.

In Plexus the question of the balance between leadership and democracy was not relevant, and I believe myself to be a profoundly democratic person. I believe also that Plexus is a coherent democratic structure because it has not a hierarchic structure. Sandro covers his role of orchestrating it on a basis of a democratic participation.

Everybody has his/her own point view and with different art forms in which not everybody is interested in it.

Plexus Black Box was an attempt to document the history of Plexus.

My relationship with Plexus started in 1985 on the occasion of the memorial for the death of Ralston Farina, a performing artist.

Through Willoughby Sharp I met Plexus in that occasion at CUANDO. Time was gravity for Ralston holding him down. The concept of "time-art" was that art was related to time.

In 1985 I showed at CUANDO a large copy of the Haddamard Matrix dedicated to Ralston; in 1986 I started the mass-production of 1000 copies of it to be distributed to the audience at CUANDO through the air fan of Ralston.

In 1987 I produced an interactive telecommunication art event with Willoughby Sharp. In the same year I participated in the Symposium on the Dematerialization of Art, held at NYU-Icasa where I produced several hundred copies of my Haddamard Matrix drawing and distributed them by leaving them on the chairs of the audience. A journalist, from the audience asked to me why it was art, when it was not looked at like it was expected to be, in some customary way.

In 1988 I faxed it from NYU to Sardinia. Most of what I did was engaged with the memory of Ralston Farina and to mechanisms of perception. I am interested in studies on aesthetic perception and divine proportion. The ultimate objective of my participation in Plexus was to facilitate communications among people, and I started to realize how I could use my model of vision, based on the sunflower model, to reduce a great quantity of information in the process of telecommunication broadcasting.

What is the Plexus Black Box and what is its function? Ritual is very important in the understanding of it by giving continuity and connecting one activity to another one.

Initially I did not like ritual but after I participated more in these activities I understood that the ritual of documentation became a significant part of Plexus by keeping in it the life of the community and bringing people together. The ritual activities of the documentation became a form of collective joint participation in which each one gave up something in order to share in a global participation which turned to become a contemporary art form.

These ritual activities of Plexus Black Box which easily could be characterized as chaotic activities turned into a kind of art form which ended by also documenting the unity and coherence of all this chaos.

Plexus Black Box became in the end the unifying element of a collective participation in which the photo of that moment was the key ritual element of a documentation for Plexus own history.

Sandro Dernini

Transcript from "Cultural Navigation and Community: The Lower East Side," the first round table of the Summer Institute of Living Traditions of New York University, Barney Building, Summer 1993.

De Leon: Sandro, when you came to New York from Italy, you blended long time after everybody-else landed, when you landed, you came to Lower East Side. How did you plug in the artistic vibes of the Lower East Side?

Sandro: My story was that in 1981 I moved in the Lower East Side, looking for a cheap apartment. I didn't know anything about how rich culturally was the community, because as Italian, I was related to SOHO, I was more related to Chelsea where Plexus was originally in Chelsea. And because of its cultural activities there Plexus ended on the street.

The only place where I got hospitality was in the Lower East Side, in a basement of a burned building, a really incredible gathering artists place, where I discovered the community.

I see here many artists that they came from the basement, from The Shuttle Theatre. One dollar to get in, very tough to get in, because, we didn't want too many limousines outside on the street, because we should get in trouble with the Fire Department.

At the Shuttle Theatre there was really an art audience, made by the same artists who were playing.

Then I discovered what means to be in Lower East Side. Because I was lucky, I was lucky to have big mama as Ms. Sarah Farley, now she is dead. She was a community leader of the homesteaders in the Lower East Side where there was a large quantity land with burned buildings that the community people, for their survival, was trying to recover, always in big fight with the Mayor Koch. She always stated that land was belonging to the people.

“People have the right to live”, she usually used to say.

In this way I discovered the Lower East Side Community and how was so connected culturally. That brought to me to understand my roots and what means to defend your own traditions. Lower East Side isn't just a place for old or new immigrants. There was very rich, may be the richest, place culturally in New York. This is my relationship with Lower East Side. Culturally, very rich people.

DeLeon: How did you tie to the artistic tradition here?

Sandro: This is the story, my background is basically Avant-Garde and Jazz. Jazz was for us Avant-Garde and Jazz is Poetry. And of course as soon I turned on this side I met William Parker, Miguel Algarin and Micky Pinero. It was the time, 1984, when we made a call “In Order to Survive” all together in unity we made a call from the East 6th Street. Today we're recalling our history: on December 10th 1992, in the morning of the Human Right Day we met with Dennis deLeon at City Hall. In the evening, we're here in this same auditorium, with many others, recalling the community call “In order to Survive,” because that was and is a crucial time, it was like now, there was no money, there was only art. Art is art relationship with the community. I saw many galleries coming Lower East Side, gentrifying the place. I saw NYU as a gentrification entity, I see now also how NYU, specially with this building Barney Building, and this art department, have an incredible opportunity to show our rich is the artistic and cultural scene of the Lower East Side.

I would like to make a point. Here I am as coordinator of the Well Being project, I just came back from Italy, what we have here is very positive attempt. Every scene is moving finally to bridge the community and the institution to be committed to work together in the direction of well- being and reconciliation project.

There is a calendar, program of activities that goes back to the first appointment, behind this first round table of NYU, at Nuyorican Poet Cafe. We are planning a series of important activities called "The Repatriation of Art Into Community" The first was done within a collaboration between The Nuyorican Poets Cafe and Museum Modern Art of New York. Art must stay in the community, in the streets. The street is a beautiful incredible art space, so rich that you can go in the street and set-up a street show. We have a very rich art scene in the Lower East Side....

Basically here on the table there is some kind of strategy. In the bottom of the flyer, the focus of the institute will be on "Community-based collaborative efforts to devise urban art education strategies." We had a meeting in David's office and the discussion was on strategies or means. Let's go back to strategies. In this case, it is very crucial to get a picture of the community, of the environment that really is not wealth. There are a lot of problems in the community. And the subtitle of "Cultural Navigation and Community" is "Art, Reconciliation and Well-Being." We know that recently on the New York Times there was an article about how the economic wealth measurement was modified by the presence of human rights and quality of life, that's called well-being. We're years working now in the direction of reconciliation and well-being, trying to understand the rule of art and in this case the rule of this department.

Because of this department and of this building there are some sub potential results. They could be really used in the community, and the community can starts exchanges with NYU, let's say by starting with this Summer Program of the Department of Art and Art Professions.

I spoke briefly before that I left for Italy, as coordinator of the organizative committee of the Well Being project. I know that it is possible to develop in a concrete way some international collaborations.

In this Round Table, we have the Nuyorican Poet Cafe and Miguel, with an incredible place. It is really incredible to go there.

Now what is reconciliation? Reconciliation has a big and incredible value, we have to start to develop in the community the framework for this diversity on which can exist reconciliation. Diversity is prevarication sometimes. "I'm different from you," "You are stranger to me."

If we are able to use art to create a reconcile environment to develop the well-being we will save money for the City, and because now everything is economic, we need a framework, not so much relate to art production but more related to the development of a curriculum in Multicultural Art Education. The community people don't have time, resources and skills to articulate it. We are under the survival pressure. We can't wait too much. The Third Round Table that will end this Summer Institute will deal with the issue of Art Urban Education.

If we will be able then to develop a team to articulate the curriculum and the working project then there are more entities in the community that will, maybe, enjoy us.

I am sure that CUANDO will join and supply what is identified in the general plan. This is a very complex plan.

DeLeon: Also the idea we want is outside governments or public agencies, we don't want to depend on from them. That is your point Miguel, we don't want to grow solely in government constantly. The government shouldn't be on our way.

Sandro: Let's say we should be able to understand how this Reconciliation Well Being Project has to be between institutions and community.

Unpublished paper "Sgusi Kunto Kosta Plexus? (I beg your pardon, how much cost Plexus?). Open Letters between Artists and Scientists", Cagliari, May 1991, translation in English by the researcher.

May 31, 1991, travelling towards Carloforte.

Dear Franco,

"Sgusi Kunto Kosta?" (I beg your pardon, how much cost?) Plexus Art?

The cause was Plexus Black Box.

The result was Plexus additional value.

"Sgusi Kunto Kosta Plexus Black Box?" (I beg your pardon, how much cost Plexus Black Box?) and which is the emotional and economic cost of Plexus in the contribution of the establishment of the 1992 Christopher Columbus Consortium and of the various Committees and Centers under development? If I interrupted you while you were talking, and I am sorry about it, it was because first for my emotions in this particular time, but specially for my urgent need "In Order To Survive" to clarify publicly the economic, scientific and artistic values of the planned event of July 4, 1991, with enough quantity and quality of information to allow an optimal take off for the Elisabeth project and for its necessary funds-raising.

In the middle of my interruption to you, Silvano Tagliagambe in a puzzled way, asked to me which was the additional value that I was speaking about.

Thanks to these breaks off or intermissions we started finally to introduce the concept of value, additional in this case, in reference to Plexus.

"Plexus Passport n°2" could become the vehicle to continue our open letters, to clarify the historical additional value that Plexus gained. It could serve to inform the Community without too much noise of the trajectory that "The Serpent" is following in reference to "what is the case," "what could be the case," and "what should be the case" of Plexus Black Box.

"Sgusi Kunto Kosta" Plexus today after Gavoi, after the dressing event of the Elisabeth, after the delivery in Gorée of the first lot of art works?

“Sgusi Kuantu Kosterà” (I beg your pardon, how much will cost) to set down under the sea Plexus Black Box on July 4, 1991, in Carloforte? and How much will cost this quantity and quality of art?

“Fire!!” this is the key word today, before and after Gavoi.

On May 30, 1991, “In Order To Survive” was again the message, and if I interrupted you, it was not because I did not like the house’s wine, but for my friendly relationship with you built on the work made together in all these years.

“Sgusi Kuantu Kosta Plexus?”

It has not price. But it has an additional value which can be estimated year by year. Which is the value of Plexus will be a question that will be asked soon at different levels;

The additional value will be clarified within this historical contemporary context, from the China’s events, Saddam, Noriega, to the world marketing control for the 1992 Columbus event.

What is the additional value of the first lot of artworks plus the second lot collected by Plexus in direction of the opening in Gorée of an World Art Fund for the survival of the Living Traditions in Art in risk of extinction?

One plus One equals Two.

This does not apply to Plexus. In Plexus One plus One are synergetic and they create an causal interaction producing an additional value.

Plexus is synergetic, it is living matter. But this is another story, look at “Physics of the Matter,” “Aesthetics,” and “Cybernetics.”

One plus One equals History of Art, which Art? Plexus Art!

How the value of an art work is made?

The cultural value is given by a basic economic law of demand and supply.

The exchange value is modified by speculative operations of collectors and dealers who invest on that particular artist or, better, art movement. It gives more speculative opportunities in order to swell up the exchange of prices.

“Il Cambio di Rotta” (The Change of Route) for Plexus could be to sum its cultural value with a new exchange value. For example, through limited editions of art works, “Plexus Money,” “Plexus Stamps,” “Plexus Certified Checks.” For such purpose it is necessary to switch the exchange route with the market.

Instead to be collectors and dealers to speculate on artists, Plexus should choose and invest on collectors and dealers like Franco Girina, who in the first person historically believed in Plexus, without speculations, in order then that they will turn to the market their additional values, made artificially - scientifically.

How much is the value today of the art works given in 1987 to the collector Girina as value exchange to print the “Passport for Plexus Serpent”? Surely more than before.

One plus One equals to?

The photos of the installation made on November 9th, 1990, at Anna Saba's studio, with "La Treccia di Gavoi" by Micaela Serino, are still present in my memory, together with the intelligent exchange of eyes between us following our images game, built for the continuation of the historical ongoing travelling within the Plexus Black Box.

But what is the value of emotions and information, compressed in that installation? It was supposed to become permanent, finalized to a journey towards the new challenge of "Plexus Passport n°2", in order to document the activities made after Gavoi, and before from 1982 to 1990.

"Plexus Black Box", set down under the sea, will serve to give a significant signal for an acknowledgement of this additional economic and artistic value to Plexus that is defending so hardly for the artist in the first person, who made possible One plus one equals History, and for the establishment of an credit line for the International Art Community of Plexus.

It is because of the setting down under the sea of "Plexus Black Box" that this intermission born, not attended.

Franco, as David Ecker wrote to you in the already historical letter on January 10, 1990, "let's play with Plexus Black Box and bring all us to the enlightenment." Bring your Serpent and Nur will win.

Anyway you were right about to not brake off. We loose in quality for the need of quantity. I hope that we could continue to deal with this dilemma in Vienna.

Yours, Plexus 23s.

Paper "The Artist in the First Person," published in Passport for Plexus Serpent, Cagliari, Celt Edition, 1987.

160 artists of 23 different nationalities, that on July 4, 1987 arrived in the sanctuary of Sa Itria in Sardinia, were the real protagonists 'in the first person' of Plexus art co-opera n° 4, Il Serpente di Pietra.

This event was organized as the first international art slaves market show, produced and managed by the artist in the first person. It took form in the confrontation, collision, encounter between all players of this Plexus 'challenge-game-show' on the star system of the art market.

It was played by two teams mainly:

A) The co-authors of 'the anti-libretto' for an art co-opera, made as an unitary and compressed presentation of the synchronized collective deconstruction of the serpent.

B) The authors of 'the libretto' for an art opera as a modular and selective construction of individual art-works.

The stake was the apple of the art star system.

The supreme judge was the Serpent.

In the atelier des arts that came first and built Il Serpente di Pietra Plexus interacted with the time-space of Sa Itria, a megalithic sanctuary, ten miles far from Gavoi (a small village at the center of the island of Sardinia, Italy), and with the times-spaces of the 160 artists speaking different languages and codes.

The artist in the first person became the absolute winner of this Plexus game, playing as slave and working as artist, free indeed to express itself without curators, mediators and critics.

My image of Plexus artistic director, since Plexus art slave journey started in New York in 1986, was the slaves dealer who forced time-space of individual artists as slaves of art, trying (no always successfully) to chain them into a Plexus frame of an art slave ship escaping from New York City art market control.

My task as art slaves trader as well as artistic director was to follow the needs of Plexus art slave journey for a common Plexus strategy of a marketing control of the global image of Il Serpente di Pietra as Plexus art co-opera n°4, and for its outsider perception as an unitary total theatre.

Inside Plexus there was the violence of very strong emotions, evoked by the surprising panorama around the megalithic sanctuary-stage, and produced by particular conditions in which this international auto financed journey developed and (not ended yet) arrived in Sardinia after many economic, political, artistic, technical, and personal difficulties (not easy to digest). These present difficulties caused problems, fights, separations, discussions, critic dialogues, and solidarity finally like on a real slave ship.

As in a modern rite, dedicated to Bruce Richard Nugent's Fire!! (Harlem 1926) and to the bronze mutant of my land of Sardinia, Plexus artistic director was eaten by a serpent of fire. Deliberately I burned and destroyed the image of Plexus artistic director, as previously I announced in 1986 in New York, after Eve art opera n°3, following the 'art-logic' and the 'time-art' of Plexus strategy map against the pyramid of the star art system.

There is not anymore time-space for art filters between the artist in the first person and Plexus.

Plexus is a co-authorship art venture, created, produced, and managed by the artist in the first person only.

In the end of Il Serpente di Pietra, as in an ancient rite, the ancestral messenger by Arturo Lindsay set on fire a box containing all artists's signatures.

A serpent of real fire came from the burning art box and set in fire my person just in the moment that I was burning my clothes of Plexus artistic director as in a modern sacrifice. This was not a sham metaphor.

Plexus art slave market show was not only an art nonsense, Il Serpente di Pietra was really the first international art meeting in Sardinia of so many artists, outside the conventional and official 'roads' of the international art

scene, without any pope giving credibility or/and advertising such event, and outside New York City, the most compulsory and important art shipping place in the contemporary art world, and usual stage of the past Plexus events.

The presence in Sardinia of so many artists and scientists coming from so many different places free to have an open and critic dialogue with their work of art, working at the same time-space on the same subject/object (the serpent), it was a positive proof, a confirmation and support, for Plexus idea to use the metaphor of universal myths as a shuttle of multi-lateral art communication.

Thank to the Serpent, Plexus became an international art network, produced independently by the artist in the first person.

Plexus future is now responsibility only of the artist in the first person, as the winner of the art apple.

Plexus artistic director now has been replaced by the invisible serpent with wings Ningki-Nangka, Plexus art co-opera n°5, the continuation of Plexus art journey towards Dakar, and towards a future richer of fantasy, freedom and equity.

The artist in the first person is now the producer of the next second phase in the global project (1985-1990) of Plexus Multi-Lateral Recall Network: the production.

Il Serpente di Pietra, following Plexus strategy, closed the first phase of promotion (1985-1987) to establish an independent international art community credit line for the artist in the first person and for Plexus art co-operas.

Plexus art slave ship can and should become an art framework to develop, during its art journey, an international cooperation between all artists as art producers to negotiate a new contract of art, made by/for the artist in the first person.

Paper Art Slavery, published in Passport for Plexus Serpent, Cagliari, Celt Editions, 1987.

Plexus is a framework for global art projects, its outlines of development are Plexus art co-operas, coproduced by the artist in the first person.

These global art projects are a compression of time-space, myth, science, art and relativity, in which as in a modern rite, 150-350 artists and scientists are working together, tuned in a metaphor to celebrate and deconstrue.

Plexus has coproduced three art operas: Goya's Time, New York, 1985, with the participation of 67 artists; Purgatorio Show, New York, 1985, with 350 artists; Eve, New York, 1986, with 220 artists; and one art co-opera Il Serpente di Pietra (The Serpent of Stone), Gavoi (Sardinia), Italy, 1987, with 160 artists of 23 different nationalities.

Il Serpente di Pietra, art co-opera n°4, was the continuation of the journey of an art slaves ship, travelling through reality and fantasy. During this journey Plexus has transformed artistically the ferryboat, travelling from the Italian coast to the island of Sardinia, into a Dutch slaves ship, toward Dakar (Senegal).

Then, during the Plexus art journey, the Italian ferryboat was re transformed into the ship Electra, Guglielmo Marconi's travelling laboratory. A radio signal for freedom in art communication was transmitted, to dedicate the Serpent to the Centenary (1887-1987) of Heinrich Hertz's electromagnetic proof, which materialized the invisible and revolutionised our daily controlled electronic living.

Since 1982 in New York Plexus has developed a continuous activity in the field of interdisciplinary art research.

Since 1985 it has focused its interest on the interaction between art and science, to produce Plexus art co-opera as a synchronized presentation of art & science concept-images.

Plexus art co-opera has its roots in total theatre, jazz, international art fairs, scientific laboratories, happenings, Fluxus, and in the history of modern art. Plexus brainstorms universal metaphors like The Serpent. Plexus uses metaphors to create common ground between artists and scientists from various cultures with different values. Plexus uses all available art fields that interact synchronously among themselves and the relative time-space of each art co-opera.

A Plexus atelier comes first and builds these art shows, through a brainstorm made by 'time-art' and 'art-logic' that tunes in the metaphor in deconstruction (the Serpent) all artists.

From the megalithic sanctuary of Sa Itria (Gavoi) Il Serpente di Pietra has linked scientists and artists from many different part of the world, from Kassel to Sidney, Montreal, Wien, Wales, through a computer network of European and American universities, organised by the Dax (Digital Art Exchange) Group of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and the Department of Physics of the State University of Cagliari (Sardinia).

Plexus will continue the journey of the art slaves ship towards Dakar, where in the past from the island of Goree the first slaves ships left. There Plexus will present Plexus art co-opera n°5, the invisible African Serpent Ningki-Nangka, to start again its art journey, taking the artists not any longer slaves to a new art world in freedom.

In 1988 Plexus will dedicate the continuation of the journey of Plexus art ship to the centenary of the rotator electromagnetic fields by Nicolay Tesla (1888-1988), as a metaphor to celebrate the freedom for the artist in the first person to join the international art community.

Paper "The Metaphor as a Travelling Factory", published in Passport for Plexus Serpent, Cagliari, Celt Editions, 1987.

The metaphoric language of art can be used efficaciously as an international and interdisciplinary system for a more qualified information and education if synchronized with modern science and coloured with universal myths.

Plexus art co-opera uses the metaphor as a multi-category framework, as a crossing over between knowledge and unconsciousness.

Plexus uses mythology artistically with metaphoric references to science and marketing that modernizes the myth as a 'commodity symbol.'

The metaphor is an ultra-rapid integrated communication system.

Plexus art co-opera has specific forms in relation to the geo-political conditions in which it is produced, and the artist in the first person is not only the producer but also the consumer and the final product in the of this modern rite.

In Plexus art co-opera n°3 Eve, the artists, as slaves to be sold in public auction to the art market, were handcuffed together with their art works on board the art slaves ship, to underline that for them there is no separation between artist, art, and art community. It was to protest against the dynamics of the art market, imposing production mechanisms coming from the general market that are not those of art. Through critics, dealers, gallerists, mediators and other filters the image of 'the artist in the third person' has been created, to respect the needs of the star system, the hierarchic structure is more functional to the marketing control that is governing the world market of the contemporary age.

Art should not be considered only an exclusive 'commodity symbol' for commercial trade, but a 'food' for our nourishment, a compression of high 'know how,' not exclusive, not expensive, to fly with our bodymachine outside limits and borders of rational worlds and controlled markets.

The metaphor is an ultra-rapid integrated communication system. It works with nanoseconds (billionths of a second), the time-scale with which today our logic computers are operating. One nanosecond is so fast that it exists before its rational thought. The metaphoric language of art can let us cross the boundaries of specialistic fields, working by concatenated structures. Time-space, art, science, history, can only be compressed in a continuum in evolution, never consumed, only imperfectly perceived through their developments and jumps of discontinuity, as a serpent eating its tail act as selfnourishment, which does not disappear consuming itself, but transforms itself continuously, recycling its matter.

Official history with its ages and schools is not the measure of reality. The human being has modified with culture the rules of history, of its own natural evolution. To know the future is also to look back to the past, to arrive at the

sources of our common roots, where the game of the metaphor can contain the memory of our lost ancestors.

The metaphor of art can help us to see beyond the optical and rational horizon, Plexus can be considered as a mutant following its sociobiological evolution as a dolphin, member of our common class of mammalian that sees by means of its bio-electromagnetic sonar.

Not understanding and not accepting our common nature, and at the same time diversity, created an antagonism that took root in all different levels of our everyday life individually and collectively. The loss of freedom for the diversity to cohabit with the homogeneous more organized majority has been the cause of conflicts between different worlds, with the continuous attempt at predominance by one identity over the other: the stronger over the weaker, the more rational over the less or arational, the white over the black or red, the richer over the poorer and Adam over Eve. Against this antagonism the pluralism of the Serpent metaphor has been deconstructed by Plexus to defend Human Rights against any discrimination, selection, racism and Apartheid. In Plexus, in which the artist in the first person coexists as an individual system with other systems, there is a common patrimony which is shared collectively, and the artist has to be aware of the inter dependability of each in the modular construction of Plexus art co-opera.

Therefore Plexus art co-opera as an art project is consumed by human beings (artists and audience) and this consumption causes cultural and physiological reactions effecting their metabolism, and interacting between them and interlacing with the biocultural evolution. There is always an interaction between culture and nature. May be art is the gene 'nonsense' of our genetic evolution and Plexus can be the image of a researcher of the invisible, where however the invisible is a word and a world of modern science.

The metaphor for its pluralistic interpretations is used by Plexus project as the 'travelling factory' for its multi-lateral recall products.

Plexus uses rational and a-rational methodologies in a coloured framework of global vision and relativity to try to discover in which panorama the art co-opera, at the same time object and subject, is moving.

For the 90's Plexus art co-opera should be considered as an materialized metaphor, and art should be produced, consumed and loved as a dematerialized food to recall our ancestral memory.

Paper "Plexus Multi-Lateral Recall Network Project, 1985-1990," published in Passport for Plexus Serpent, Cagliari, Celt Editions, 1987.

The Webster Dictionary defines Plexus as a structure in the form of a network; as a network of interlacing blood vessels or nerves.

Plexus is a six years international art project (1985-1990), to develop a multi-lateral recall network, produced by the artist in the first person.

“The artist in the first person” is the author and producer of its own project. Artists and scientists are the partners of Plexus, as co-authors and coproducers of this co-authorship art venture, through their individual projects, that flow together as independent productions in the global production plan of Plexus art co-opera.

Plexus will promote, by a quarterly newsletter, exchanges between the coproducers, to establish an international art community credit line for the artist in the first person and for Plexus.

The project uses the metaphor as a ‘travelling factory’ of concept-images to produce global art projects (Plexus art co-operas) made for the critic consumer of the material culture of the 90’s.

Plexus project is schematically divided by integrated phases of marketing mix: promotion, production, price, replacement, within short (1985-87), medium (1988), and long terms (1989-90).

Plexus coproduction structure, always in evolution, is represented in the Plexus strategy map as a truncate cone (the ancient nuraghic tower) built by the coproducers associated as in a modern rite. The participation in it is made by “art logic” and “time-art,” through individual projects and independent productions.

The first level of participation for an artist is to deliver to Plexus her/his own project. This first step will allow communication with other producers through the newsletter, operating as a shuttle of Plexus brainstorm and to open a credit line on that individual project in Plexus network.

The second level is the re-elaboration of the individual and of the global project in relation to new developments born from Plexus brainstorm.

The third level is to produce the individual project as an independent production.

The fourth level is to be part of the global program, with phases of research, elaboration, actualization, interacting in the integrated concept of marketing mix for the strategic establishment of Plexus multi-lateral recall network, where recall means collection of concept-images and memory.

In order to participate at the beginning to plexus network project it is necessary to recall the following:

- participation in Plexus is made only by the delivery of a project whose the artist in the first person is the producer;
- to deliver the project/product in the time-space with the agreed deliveries of the other coproducers of the Plexus art co-opera;
- to identify the mutual goals and benefits involved in developing and establishing Plexus as an international consortium/umbrella of independent art producers;
- to avoid the bureaucratic time-space of traditional cultural organization;
- to learn to profit from the direct dialogue between artists and scientists without mediators or agents;

- to plan a Plexus calendar for the next activities of common interest;
- to learn to profit from the direct dialogue between the artist in the first person and private investors as 'angels.'

Paper "A Plexus of Serpents," published in the Plexus Newsletter 1988, New York, by Plexus International Art Urban Forum Inc.

Plexus is a symbiotic network born from the multi-lateral interaction of artists and scientists working together in order to survive.

The Webster New College Dictionary defines Plexus as "a network of interrelating blood vessels or nerves." A Plexus co-opera is a mixed structure of interrelating parts, organic and inorganic, concrete and abstract, rational and arational, incorporated and non incorporated. The serpent eating its tail is the Plexus metaphor for the cross-fertilization of art and science, of knowledge and the unconscious.

Since 1985, Plexus has been coproducing co-operas as synchronized presentations of art and science. Plexus taps universal metaphors such as the serpent. Plexus uses these metaphors to create common ground between artists and scientists from various cultures with different values. Plexus deconstructs and re-presents these metaphors as both artistic and scientific reality.

Plexus is committed to the proposition that all people are creative survivalists. It believes that the art/ science involvement of the individual can do more to promote an environment conducive to the evolution of creativity than all the machinations of an infinite number of public agencies.

Plexus means any interaction of an interdisciplinary network ranging from fantasy and observation through discussion and reflection through demonstration and celebration and beginning again and again.

Explain it: Plexus is a metaphor for recalled memories in a framework which works within a nanosecond. It is unity by repetition and reification. The serpent is the mutant.

Paper "Artist in the first Person: Mephistopheles," published in the Plexus Newsletter 1988, New York, by Plexus International Art Urban Forum Inc.

The Artist in the first person is the artist qua producer, where the final product is the artist himself/herself. 'Mephistopheles' is the artist in the first person who abolishes any distinctions between art and artist. 'Mephistopheles' is also an operative tool within Plexus framework. It operates via "artlogic" rather than "rationality." "Mephistopheles" is served up by the artist in the first person as nourishment to keep ancestral art memory alive.

The artist in the third person, where the artist is defined only by reference to his/her market position and saleable commodities, is an effect of the modern

art market, a hierarchical star system based on false notions of “marketability” and “rationality.” The modern art market is a sacrificial system which obliterates the artist, leaving only a product.

At the point at which art became alienated from culture and community, the artist, as artist in the third person, lost all art memory and became slave to rational considerations. The artist in the third person had to incorporate patronage, market influences and other interferences into the (inner) artistic process to stay alive. At its worst, these interferences defined the very discourse of artistic creation.

Prior to the point of the alienation of art from culture and community, the artist, as artist in the first person, was able to consume and to be consumed by his/her own culture and art in a circular dialectic.

“Mephistopheles,” as an art opera of the artist in the first person, delves into lost art memory. As such, it flies in the face of market pressure. It places modern technology in the hands of modern artists as a tool for artistic excavation. Both art and technology suffer from the pressures of rationality and marketability. Modern art exhibitions, driven by the need for new products, fail to provide dialogue between artists and communities from which they have grown.

Stephen DiLauro

Unpublished paper “A Note about the Plexus Art Operas,” in PLEXUS Recall 1, Passport for Purgatorio, New York, 1986.

As a poet and showman nothing in my life to date brings such vivid and passionate recollections as the time of the Plexus art operas, “Goya Time,” “Purgatorio,” “Eve.”

Though the names of all the artists who contributed to these productions are listed within this volume, certain individuals participated in such a big way that I feel compelled to mention them here: Lawrence “Butch” Morris, il maestro; Gretta Safferty; Anita Steckel; Cowboy Ray Kelly, captain of the art slave ship; Miguel Algarin; Lenny Horowitz; Albert DiMartino; David Boyle; Joe Strand; Paolo Buggiani; Willoughby Sharp; and Sandro Dernini, art director extraordinaire.

I have seen tempers flare, heard voices raised watched lust blossom and fade, enjoyed outstanding music, observed brilliant bursts of energy and artistic

achievement and enjoyed the finished product -- spectacles that are unique in the history of opera.

One of the most amazing aspects of these operas is the extremely low budget on which they were produced. That such bursts of creative output were underwritten by a budget about the equivalent of a Trappist monk's annual wages attests to the dedication everyone involved brought to bear.

Brilliant moments and scenes leap to mind: the firing squad and clouds of smoke in "Goya Time"; the chaotic six floors of CUANDO being taken over for an artists' installation -- from the sub-basement to the top -- with the roof representing the magnificence of Paradise; the Minotaurus emerging from the art slave ship as it sailed the seas of myth and history -- the horns of the Minotaurus aflame and Eve appearing as Billie Holiday, walking Mefisto on a leash.

Now another opera is in the works -- "The Serpent." It is with more than a bit a wonderment that I approach this strange admixture again. But approach it I must -- just as the artists in these pages were compelled and attracted to our three previous operas. Onward, to Rome and the Serpent.

Article "Plexus Opera," published in ART WORLD Magazine, Vol.13, N.2, December 1988, Glen Head, New York

What is Plexus? This is a question I am often asked. The answer evolves as Plexus itself evolves. The "official" answer, as put forth by Dr. Sandro Dernini, founder of Plexus International, is that "Plexus is an international cartel of independent producers working in the first person." Be that as it may, Plexus at time has appeared to some observers to be no more than a series of opportunities for group photos.

For me, though, Plexus is beautiful chaos from which new names, new faces, and a new art form is emerging - the art opera. These performance spectacles are, perhaps without originally intending to be, the realization of Antonin Artaud's theories for a Theatre of Cruelty - a theatre in which masks, dance, music and shamanistic ritual take precedence over "text." As a playwright this is not the type of theatre I am moving toward. I prefer a reliance on the text, especially when the script is one I have wrote. But as an art critic, and as a man of the theatre, I find these extravaganzas fascinating. I am propelled to furthering this new art form, even though our outing here in Manhattan on November 3rd was a flopera.

On New Year's Eve this year, as a prelude to our production at the Pan African Arts Festival in June 1989, Plexus will present the world's first opera in the form of a parade - The Serpent. More than two hundred and fifty artists, musicians, singers and dancers paraded through the street of the isle of Goree, Senegal, from the House of Slaves to the Kilimanjaro Club. This was

Act One of a concept in which opera, theatre and fine art come together to make a new kind of show business.

Unpublished paper "The Closing of Plexus Black Box," New York, December 1990.

The closing of the Black Box at Teatro in Trastevere represents the end of an era. Since 1984, at the Shuttle Theater in Manhattan. I have known and worked with Doctor Sandro Dernini. Our collaboration led to spectacular theatrical art extravaganzas such as *The Artificial Time of Purgatorio* on the Night of No Moon, *Eve*, *Il Viaggio del Serpente*, and 1992: *Cristoforo Colombo Viaggio nel Pianeta Arte*.

Now that the Black Box is being closed perhaps a moment of reflection is in order.

Plexus, which Dr. Dernini birthed, became a focal point for hundreds of artists in New York and elsewhere. It was a long moment in the history of theatre and art. Nothing as vibrant as these shows has ever been mounted before or since. Costumed players, orchestras, choral groups, singers, performance artists, ballets and visual artists all came together to celebrate freedom of communication.

As the Plexus dramaturgh and impresario, I was repeatedly amazed at the levels of creativity and energy that went into these shows. Exploring myth and history through artistic interpretation brought to life the theories of Antonin Artaud in a manner that perhaps even he never envisioned.

Plexus art operas, or art co-operas as some called them, had a way of making the artists involved reach beyond themselves.

The creation of a new form of expression required art slaves who would execute these art operas regardless of market considerations.

But that was the 1980s. Now it is almost 1991. The art slaves have become the new masters of the art world.

On October 12, 1992, I will present an operatic art spectacle. The expression "made in the 80s for the 90s" is becoming a reality. Both Dr. Dernini and I are working to celebrate the spirit of Christopher Columbus without glossing over the historical realities that some people find repugnant.

Finally, what is any kind of opera without a diva, Sara Jackson, my wife and inspiration, is the new queen of the art opera. Without her love, encouragement, support and strength I might have given up my role as art slave without moving ahead to assume the cloak of a master. Dr. Dernini, carrying Plexus Passport 23s on *La Caravella dell'Arte*, has found his personal diva in Maria Pia. We are all moving ahead in life and in Art.

La luta continua!

Albert DiMartino

Unpublished paper “Statement of Purpose”, in PLEXUS Recall 1, Passport for Purgatorio, New York, 1986.

We find ourselves in a time when white is black, and black is white. Think of a word. How is it heard? The one you try all day to say the right way, searching so long to say it all wrong.

As Dickens put it “it was the best of times, it was the worst of times, we were all going to heaven, we were all going the other way.” So it is to-day. It’s as though, we as a race are trying to understand the prime directive (Love Thy Neighbour as Thy Self).

There are no static physical things in existence. That also goes for personal relations, group dynamics and time. In physical reality, something appears “static” only at a particular level. So it is with cultural consciousness and collective alternative aesthetics.

Plexus is not something new, all through time the artists have always expressed themselves in the first person. That has always been the alchemical element that has made art fresh and new to the culture of each progressing time. The perspective of the first person made the divine connection between the creator and every day life, so the artist in the first person became a political and economic commodity, who ruled more historical and cultural power.

As far back in recorded time as we can go, all that was logic an illuminated thought was the artist in the first person. So, for as far as we stand now, we homo sapiens are still at the beginning of our time. With all of our progress our “state of the art” is comparatively nothing when matched to our potential. Since we left the enlightened naivete of the garden we have felt the existence that the act of creation; be it making love, money, power or art has somehow taken up that empty space.

Art. Being an artist was the only one of these tasks that the individual could do in the first person. Though art is created in the first person it is made for the observer, which is racial collective the human experience. This gestalt is the main racial evolutionary force, for though’ time and experience seems to stand still when compared with the direction of higher creative social and spiritual evolution. Plexus can be the crystal to focus the light of this change through. The will to manifest this higher potential is not the “ego” in the first person, but rather the individuals conscious effort to harmonize with this evolutionary potential.

We, as a race are at a crossroads with the advent of nuclear and even more horrific Tesla energy weapons, it can no longer be “business” as usual. It is the responsibility of the artist in the first person to create “alternative aesthetics” to perpetuate and positively re-inforce the higher evolutionary potential that our creation spawned.

Plexus, as an international group of artists, is at a point to facilitate this step in higher aesthetically generated survival and evolution. It has been positioned in time and space with the responsibility and duty to make this change. To shirk this responsibility will be done at a high moral and karmic cost.

David Ecker

Transcript of the interview made at Angiola Churchill's loft in New York on November 1994.

I start by recalling my proposal *The Voyage of the Elisabeth* made in January 1990 and my art piece made for the Ganesh Dinner at Sandro's house in June 1990, on the occasion of my participation to the Plexus event held in Rome. My interest was and is in the distinction between physical spaces and virtual spaces.

If an idea in any sense counts as art, that is the underlying issue. Whether a photograph is a document of or is art. It involves almost all postmodern art history. It starts back with conceptual art. It starts back with Rauschenberg, Jasper Jones, John Cage, and before, for the first time in 1910 with Charles Ives's *Three New England Places*, a complex musical composition giving the impression of separate bands marching from opposite directions toward the village square, playing different tunes.

If you look at Plexus Black Box you have fragments and segments, something like Ives's piece. But the expectation they made up creates a whole of all, a total.

Expectation in postmodern thought is full projections of how the things are in the world and it is very close to everyday life which is made up of fragments and contingencies.

This is Plexus and it is only about contingencies, not planned but incidental. It looks like total confusion from an outsider view but it is not, and one thing is related to the other one and there is so much energy that really things get done spontaneously.

Social chaos is a fairly typical event of Plexus, made up of acts and gestures performed by distinguished and not so distinguished artists and scientists, depending upon the contingent circumstances under which they perform.

What happened in Rome at Sandro's house in 1990 is an example of Plexus environment, and a second example is my chance meeting with Giancarlo Schiaffini, the musician and composer, on the plane back to Rome. We generated a collaborative idea of an integrative music and visual performance, just by looking at his music score. Schiaffini has devised his own scoring system, like a visual analogue, to compose music.

I was not part of the original group which started Plexus. I was introduced to Plexus through Angiola Churchill and I served as doctoral adviser of Sandro Dernini. At certain point in 1990 I got involved because of my interest in the living traditions of art in Sardinia and since then I have participated in 3-4 Plexus events.

Plexus for me is a coalition of artists, engaged in different ways with many divergent modes with art, coming together to work on short term projects, without any unifying agreement on political or philosophical meanings on Plexus, without any unifying terms.

Over this time my grasp of events beforehand ranged from a total misunderstanding or a total confusion of what is happening just like everybody else to some sense of direction. And that is what you can expect from it. Periodically everybody felt confused and each role got confused.

On other occasions I felt I understood what was happening.

The project *Well Being* originated from this context, in Rome in 1990, with Prof. Carlo De Marco, at that time Dean of the School of Medicine of Rome

University and Sandro Dernini. The project gave relevance not only to the goal of scientific and physical well-being but also to the artistic and aesthetic dimensions of the well-being in the Twenty first Century as a measure of the health of the artists and of the societies in which they live.

Paper “Cultural Navigations” presented at the International Forum “The Well Being in the XXIst Century, held in Carloforte, Sardinia, Italy, in 1992.

The Christopher Columbus Consortium was established in New York City on March 10, 1989, by an international group of individuals interested in creating a series of projects to mark the 500th Anniversary of Columbus’s landing in the Americas. Participants at this formative meeting included professors from several universities, and representatives from community and cultural organisations. The idea of a kind of “cultural navigation” arose out of this initial discussion, the notion that what was required of us was to re-think the significance of Columbus’s landing in the light of a new global awareness of interdependence. Further meetings generated a veritable “fleet” of proposals. One of these proposals, made by Dr. Sandro Dernini of Plexus International, is now reaching fruition, a Reconciliation Forum to address the question of what will constitute well-being in the 21st Century for all the inhabitants of the globe. I should mention that our focus on well-being was the result of two preparatory meetings in the office of Professor Carlo De Marco of the University of Rome in January and June 1990. I should also mention that the lovely setting of San Pietro Island as the site of the first Forum was not an arbitrary choice. The members of the Christopher Columbus Consortium felt that this particular location would have deep political significance. For many of us, the initial idea of cultural navigation led quickly to the question of cultural identity. And for geo-political reasons, what better place than to locate our deliberations in the center of the western Mediterranean Sea. San Pietro Island was selected not only because of the amusing story of how Columbus allegedly altered the ship’s compass to mislead his crew into continuing on his intended course to Tunisia. More seriously, Sardinia provides a symbolic setting for fresh attempts at reconciliation between the peoples of the East and West as well as peoples of the North and South. The question of the cultural identity of Sardinia itself poses a challenge;

The nutritional, social, ethical and economic aspects of well-being will undoubtedly receive critical attention in the proceedings of the Forum. But surely the artistic and aesthetic dimensions of life as we live it must figure in any formulation of a comprehensive vision of well-being. The arts make visible our cultural identity and provide a direct measure of the vitality of the culture in which a particular art object or event is embedded. It follows that the arts have a special role to play in relation to the well-being of the members of each of the cultures of the world.

For one organization represented here, ISALTA, it is not enough to document the arts in their cultural settings, but to take steps to enhance the arts and thus the quality of the lives people live. The name of this intentional group states its purpose: The International Society for the Advancement of Living Traditions in Art. Historically, artistic decline accompanies the loss of

cultural identity. The felt need to preserve the meaning of a tradition in modern life is directly proportional to the loss of spiritual and material well-being of the artists and artisans sustaining their own cultures.

Western solutions to the world's misery, suffering, and destruction have tended in the 20th Century to be technological and humanistic, whereas earlier they tended to be religious or political solutions. In the name of science, human nature, or God, the assumption underlying these solutions is that they transcend culture and have universal efficacy. In contrast, we believe that the very meaning of "doing good for others" is culture-bound, as is the word "art". Cultural crises, whether caused by natural or man-made, whether caused by forces from outside or within a particular culture, are ideally to be resolved on the terms set by the affected culture. What this ideal suggests is that there should be no "privileged discourse" in multicultural exchanges. Communication on both "inside" and "outside" understandings of issues affecting well-being in the 21st Century must be encouraged from all cultural perspectives. The Forum should provide us with just such a human context.

Frans Evers

Transcript of the interview made by the researcher, in Amsterdam, in 1995

I think in the first place I found my participation very pleasant. It was an adventure and I like adventures and I also like very much to travel with a goal, with an aim and not being a tourist. It's very good being in Rome to meet artists from all different aesthetics and options and media and to be able also being invited to relate some of my theoretical works. I was glad that we could in a small kind of unit coming from Holland finally find five people from Amsterdam out of which three participated in the exhibition as well as in the parade we made around the Coliseum and also in the meta teatro. I have a very good memory of the meta theatre because there was a very vibrant atmosphere which showed that there was an audience for this which really became very interested to learn what it was all about. I remember Sandro giving a speech about the painter explaining about his painting and some other people commenting on his work and there I gave this contribution about the Berlin Wall and the colors coming off and the sound of this very strange double iconoclastic process as I described it. I was very intrigued that such a complicated but very realistic social story because this only had happened a few months before was so good to communicate with the Italian audience who had gathered there and that, for me, gave the kind of rewards that there is in a much larger field a new awareness of aesthetics arising in which the arts are related in one way or other to what's happening socially and the social dynamics are so enormous nowadays that you hardly are aware of the intensity. That we will only see when things are slowing down again and become freezing which maybe happen in a number of years but I expect that this kind of dynamic probably still goes on for another ten or fifteen years at least. So we don't know in what processes we are involved. Therefore I found it very interesting to be

faced with Plexus which was one of the few art form who is still wanting to try to make visible one of the waves in the ocean of Willem.

The concept of the open form in music was in fact worked from the beginning of the 50's until the end of the 70's when John Cage started his "happenings" in which musical compositions were not completely prescribed to the musicians but in which based on a few basic givens like numbers of times a certain sequence should be repeated the musicians themselves were allowed to create that piece of music. So completely unexpected and new material came on the moment when the music was played, and which was only partly predictable. that was a kind of form that was later on in the 60's extended to the visual arts when in Fluxus Nam June Paik and all the other people involved like founder George Maciunas started to work with their also sometimes called "happenings" and sometimes like the Germans they called it "Aktionen" in which different artists collaborated together in a performance. Interestingly the performances in that time mostly had a basis of deconstructionism or sometimes even destruction of pianos or instruments or other traditional instruments. They wanted to bring in electronics like the tape recorder, television sets, and all kinds of new constellations were made in which there was no longer any difference between music and sound. The concept of music was open to all kinds of new sounds which were allowed in the musical idiom like a "liberation of sound". In fact all these expectations were created early in the century but in the 60's they exploded. In fact the open form is a kind of exploded form, an exploded fugue of different things happening at the same time, but without any really powerful person directing exactly what is going to happen. It is much more based on agreements or the rules of a game which are accepted by everyone that is involved. With this as it's goal, and to achieve this goal the composer could not write his notes anymore, but started to develop graphic notations in which configurations of difference groups of musicians were placed but what they had to play was not determined so the basic principles were to allow certain kind of randomness in the happening. The personal influence of the artist was important which resulted always in unpredictable events.

There are indications, but an indication can be of a very different nature that can be simply a symbolic almost painting-like structure which the musicians are to translate. So a kind of translation of visual cues or signs into auditory cues and signs and the predictable outcome of that is a kind of piece which is much more determined by sound structures and timbres than by pitch sequences or by dynamic forms but other composers did not use paintings; they started to work by introducing numbers and quotations, or like John Cage did use I-Ching to achieve at this kind of openness of the form by introducing elements which were already existing as a context the most famous example of Cage is the piece in which the pianist is sitting for a few minutes and just doing...not touching the instrument.

As the audience you become aware of the sound that is always around you...ecological sounds , for instance and in that way also breaking the limit or the boundary between what is considered music as in you might say

a sound environment which at least Cage tried to show as a discontinuous area which is connecting those words and you will find these connections when you open the form.

And there is juxtaposition. It's rather abstract but it simply means placing objects in relation to each other in a space. But it's an important theoretical term because it is one of the ways in which different art forms can be connected. to put them opposed in one space. instead of just only bringing them together in one so called emotional or musical line.

The first time we came out with the modular construction December 30 1984, it was Willem Brugman met me at a place in New Haven where I used to live and where Willem came in with a group of artists presenting an exhibition of paintings of the father of one of the artists Dimitri Rimskys and then I was introduced by one of the people who was shooting the exhibition with a video and then a collaboration started which resulted in few week in a show which was called Under Permanent Construction which was in fact based on a number of different story lines that was the Rubayat of Omar Kayam and another story line was Dream of a Madman , Dostyevsky.

Then Willem found out that I had brought out from Amsterdam nine music cassettes made with a group of local Amsterdam artists under the name of ROYGBIV and in ROYGBIV there was an attempt to work with the electronic medium in an improvisational way and so that in the show they were brought together and the extra stage design made by Uri Stern, a local architects who were Israeli who lived in New Haven and had followed courses at the Yale architecture department but he wanted to change his career in the direction of theatre.

He brought into the theatre many beautiful constructions which were in fact reconstructions of existing materials which he had collected from all kinds of spaces ...demolition sites... the show itself was an enormously interesting working project- very condensed and also very new to many of the people. So, when the show was done we were sitting together to see how we could make a re composition of the videos and the materials which were used in preparing the show. In that discussion I started my first deep aesthetic communication with Willem Brugman explaining the background of ROYGBIV music.

The fascination with color; the relationship to Dutch colorism like in abstract arts of Piet Mondrian used those primary colors and forms and then, all of a sudden, Willem popped up with a visual artist from Switzerland called Richard Lohse. He was an artist who, in the Post World War period, was one of the few artist who continued to work in abstract expressionism and he connected his work to the serial approach of the composers. And what was the composers idea in those days-to have a kind of democratic or equality between musical parameters.

Like pitch-they wanted to compose with that as a separate parameter, volume was a separate parameter, but also timbre was a separate one, and musical space. So they had to find out ways to bring together those parameters in a system without hierarchy- and there, I think, the connection comes into

this use of the term of the modular construction because that was our fascination- how can we present the materials of the show without giving the dominance to text, without dominance of image, without dominance of music- but how to present it in a way that people could observe the process...that was the fascination I think- and one of the learning aspects of the projects in New Haven was this whole experimentation's with open form which in fact it was what we did.

But as soon as you go at it you have to think about hierarchies- so we went through all the video tapes that Dimitri had shot- and finally decided that we did not want to show the edited video results- but the process of editing. And therefore this project of December 30 was called Image Edit.

And here it is described as a video documentation of an environmental project of Dwight Street and a creation Under Permenant Construction and the arts hall will be used to present a total view of modular constructivism as a realized concept. The presentation of video as an integral part of theatrical experiments with guest speaker Dr Loek Verbeke from the Free University of Amsterdam explaining the modular construction and using a some words by the painter Richard Lohse. He made this statement " a systematic sequence of these registrations is activated in such a way that the dynamic formulation is achieved and that organization of principles arrange themselves in this process. The structure is unlimited and only receives its formal value through the presentations of tapes." Richard. P. Lohse: on the modular construction.

Modular construction starts with an acknowledgment of all the elements that are involved in a process, very detailed, very specific acknowledgment. If I am allowed to use the metaphor of cooking here...when you start cooking you will go into the kitchen and you need a stove you might need an oven you need a light you need gas or you need wood. Then you have to get the ingredients that you will start cooking with, then you have to get your pots and pans you have to get spoons and so forth. And, within the analogy of the kitchen, you can say the modular construction starts with the preparation of all the different ingredients that you need. In our case, and today that hasn't changed much the modular construction takes place in liminal space: in a space which is in between- because we don't own this space.

We actually don't even hire this space- we use this space for a limited time. So- I've made a metaphor about cooking- about the kitchen- the acknowledgment of all the different ingredients now, the next thing that is more than ever important, when you look at modular construction from a multi cultural perspective- it means that whatever the contribution is going to be from whatever perspective its coming no perspective can be dominant...all the perspectives have to exist simultaneously.

So modular construction, now in the 90's also involves synthesis of all the different ingredients and also involves synchronicity. I think that what has happened in the past ten years is that a modular construction is now more than ever possible to understand if you use the concept of synesthesia....that all

the senses , together, create an extra sense experience and this is the objective of a modular construction....that if you put all these different layers together, in a transparent way by which you superimpose them on top of one another so that space and time gets shared by all the individuals so that the individual does not lose its characteristics, but joins larger energy fields.

My particular interest is that modular constructions work on a psychic plane of peoples. So these collaborations take place under modular construction brings us in a way back to concepts of total theatre- to concepts of total energy- or to "Gesamtkunstwerk" which is a concept that is borrowed from music theater- perhaps especially Wagner- but other people were active in that as well. So the modular construction has gone into any space and any time.

Here also we can make a link to the concept that later related to our working collaboration, and that was the strange word of "ethnoreality" but which is, in fact, not so much a construction as an awareness of all these different drops of culture which are now becoming integrated in a bigger collective but we also faced still the fear of many of the cultures to make that step. and therefore we still face all these tensions.

But to comment on that situation it is so important that in art forms examples are given of constructions of elements which are allowed to express themselves in democratic way. there is place enough for all the different tastes, colors, sounds which an individual or collective of individuals will make and we are now facing the situation - in fact this comment was made soon before or soon after the Berlin Wall dropped- we were connecting here in Amsterdam for a kind of national party and brought together a number of people in front of this statue we made for this ethnoreality celebration showing that it is possible to bring together in a few hours thirty or forty nationalities, different colors of the people together and this is the situation we are living in- which is a complete contrast to not only thirty years ago- there were only a minority of colored people in Amsterdam and now in total number it is a majority- over fifty percent- so this process we have faced in the last few years is such an enormous social impact that therefore it is very important that in the arts that these kinds of energies and energy frictions especially because we also agree that in this process it is not going about making equal by killing or taking away- that's easy, yeah- but by recognition of the different forms these energies

are going to be confronted with each other and they form the new binding chemistries that come out which is still the example of the kitchen is very good - every little pan is having now its little different atmosphere and finally it has to result in a good meal- coming together in the

stomach.

Maybe it is interesting to quote Kandinsky at this point because my research has shown that for this whole problem of the relationship between the arts especially Kandinsky has made, in about 1910 or 11, a fundamental statement in which he completely broke with the Wagnerian approach of Gesamtkunstwerk there was already a wish to bring together the music, the singing, the dance, the acting and also the stage design- but a main characteristic of that approach was that in all the different lines of the media always the same movement was followed- so when the music started to speed up the dancers were running faster on the stage and the scenery changed quicker. Which, in fact is a nice result, but its only about intensities growing. Kandinsky commented on this when he gave his utopian vision on what he called the monumental theatre and it was a kind of art form in which three layers would be dealt with in a completely equal way but in an other aesthetic way than Wagner.

The layers were physical movement, musical movement and color movement. He said - when you make an approach- in all these layers the same motion pattern is followed then you only get the kind of effect in which the sensory intensity is intensified.

But as soon as you go about making one of the layers opposed to the other, so that when the music is going faster but the dancers are freezing in a still- then you get a new kind of relationship- a juxtaposition between the art forms in which new experiences come which some people call alienation- other people call it- hey, this is a new perceptual space: contrapuntal.

Leonard Horowitz

Unpublished paper "Introduction", to PLEXUS Recall 1, Passport for Purgatorio, New York, 1986.

What you feel and see is your own creation. We have created a new interactive art movement. We are called PLEXUS. I am labelling it: "Mytho-Compressionism".

This book represents, in a flat compressed version, the hopes, visions, poetry, music, dreams of hundreds of artists. This book represents a small scale version, a special history of four operas. These Co-Operas were and are the personal visions of Art History, of Francisco Goya, of Purgatory, of Mythology trance-formed into a simultaneous Tableau. Here, we have compressed history, re-created mythology. Time has speeded up and there is no time left for aesthetic distance between the artist as performer and the Art Observer. In these simultaneous Co-Operas we have destroyed this distance, and they in turn interact, creating a new operatic form. We have extended the compass of vision to include the former observer as participant.

We are user friendly. Use us or lose us. We are all independent thinker and dreamer collating our collective visions collaboratively.

Please experience us wisely and with an open heart. This is open ART.

From the program of Eve, Purgatorio Show 1986, New York:

"...Eve takes place on a mythological art slaves ship and is performed by more than 200 contemporary artists handcuffed together in an journey between reality and fantasy ending when.... Eve sits between Adam and God in the Sistine Chapel....The Marlboro robot arrives with the key words: 99 cents for a 200 artists Art Opera created and produced by all the artists together to establish an international art Community Credit Line and to establish SWEAT EQUITY ....Next fall the art slaves shuttle ship will cross the international sea to arrive in the bronze age of Sardinia in the summer 1987.

Paper "Plexus Art Redefinition of a Campbell Soup Can," published in Plexus Newsletter 1988, New York, by Plexus International Art Urban Forum, Inc.

On Saturday, February 20, at 7:00 PM., Dr. Sandro Dernini organized an historical and aesthetic "Art-Ritual" in and around the Olympic swimming pool at CUANDO. (CUANDO has been the New York Nerve Center and Plexus Performance Cultural Center since 1985, including the three Co-Operas Goya Time, Purgatorio Time, and Eve).

"An Art Redefinition of a Campbell Soup Can " was the theme song for the performance in the pool and was orchestrated by Dr. Dernini as a "Plexus Process Piece" to commemorate the first anniversary of the dematerialization of Andy Warhol.

The inspiration for this Art Ritual was two Art Symposia organized by Jorge Glusberg and Angiola Churchill of New York University, both co-directors of the International Center for Advanced Studies in Art (ICASA). Dr. Dernini has previously performed his dematerialization event at Patricia Anichini Gallery on February 18, 1987.

A phenomenological inquiry was the nature of the event and is at the same time intended as part of the on-going Plexus process. A phenomenological inquiry in this event takes on the true meaning of art as and in the process of becoming, by allowing it to happen -- giving first a basic overall structure and then allowing the participants to complete the work by collective interaction. In the swimming pool, Loisada samba Band, a Brazilian percussion band led by Tony, snaked and serpented their way through the assembled artists, setting the sonic under and overtones, resonating and reifying the room with their atavistic, basic beat.

At the apex of the pool, Dr. Dernini performed his ritualistic "Art Altar" piece by the deconstruction of a Campbell's Soup can. In fact, a whole case of Campbell's was ritualized and reinvented by placing pennies on the cans and painting them crimson red, blood red, sacrificial red. We have sacrificed King Warhol's very persona on the Art Altar to recreate further meanings and to extend the compass of art by our collective creativity.

The Art Altar was ritualized by the Plexus Process of the "Group Shot." The ritual Group Shot has a life of its own and acts as both process and documentation, a moment frozen in time intended to expand, compressing Art history into Pasts, Presents and Futures (Picasso's most important process). This process of interactive compression and expansion of time was dramatically demonstrated by the attending artists. Wes Power, a New Age product designer and ecoastrologist, aided Dr. Dernini in the construction of the Art Altar; international artist Helene Valentin waved her red Serpent flag; Franco Ciarlo displayed his Artboat sculpture; Anita Steckel exhibited her "Winged Woman" in flight from the Empire State Building to the Sistine Chapel. All this was framed by brochures and posters of past ICASA Symposia and by a statement by Gianfranco Mantegna about how "art must be subversive and sensational." All activities were videotaped by Giuseppe Sacchi and Franco Castro and will be distributed by Fran Duffy, producer of Snub TV. Lorenzo Pace performed a shamanistic ritual by transforming the torch of art in the same symbolic way that the Olympic torch has been rekindled throughout history. Voodoo music was performed and percussed by Brazilian Sidney da Silva and his Paraphernalia drum beating.

The Group Shot was further ritualized by Lynn Kanter, dressed as Marilyn Monroe, who pictorialized and Polarized the event and then displayed her immediate "photo-feedbacks." Renate Landenberger, German photographer and ecology activist, photographed all of us for posterity, or however long photographs last in our universe.

After the Group Shot, Barnaby Ruhe, world champion of boomerang, opened the case of Campbell's and imprinted each case with the Plexus logo. Frank Shifreen, original Terminal Show organizer, painted pennies with the ritualistic red of the evening. Then, Jamaican fashion designer Twilight distributed the Plexus cans to the audience, free of charge. The evening's performances ended with artist and art critic Leonard Horowitz dancing the Art Applejack and the Charleston.

Thus ended the first episode of The Deconstruction of Andy Warhol's Commodity Symbol, with Love.

Unpublished paper "Compressionisme," New York, 1989.

I first experienced 'compressionisme' in the Spring of 1985, where I was suddenly engulfed by a "Total Theatre" environmental spectacular Opera called "Goya Time," a continuous and extremely compressed dramatization of three paintings by Francisco Goya: "The Nude Maja," "The Royal Family," and "The Eight of May." This avant garde "Co-opera" was conceived, produced and directed by Dr. Sandro Dernini, an accomplished biologist from the island of Sardinia, in collaboration with Greta Safarty and Lawrence "Butch" Morris.

By dramatizing these three Goya painting and having this cast of Goya costumed artists literally run through the audience, it destroyed the normal sense of separation of staged theatre, since all at once you were not only the observer, but a participant.

In order to really catch the total and unexpected actions taking place, one had to constantly shift one's view from the Royal family on the balcony and further physically follow their descent through the amazed milling crowd below.

The Royal Family pushed their way through the packed gymnasium, past thirty artists doing their simultaneous versions of the Nude Maja, and brushed past me, almost knocking me down.

The whole spectacle was tied together and totally reified by modular music created and conducted and orchestrated by Butch Morris and further amplified by the dancing of Gloria McLean and company.

The whole Opera lasted an hour chronologically .... but... psychologically seemed to be over in ten minutes. So we can say that because of the concept and the simulsensuous presentation, that there was an intense compression of time, of events, of experience, of total unexpectedness. If one agrees with the theory that art should contain elements of surprise, then this plexus process and operas by Robert Wilson, by Meredith Monk and the Ontological-Hysterical process of Richard Forman is that Robert Wilson, Meredith Monk and Richard Forman tend to suspend time, to Surrealize it, and certainly in Robert Wilson work, to stretch time into a suspended "Dream State," a psychedelicate state.

If we have been subconsciously influenced by the motion picture (and now television), as I believe we all are, then the obvious differences between the plexus process and especially any of Wilsons masterpieces (Einstein on the Beach) is that Robert Wilsons ouvre has a strong sense of slowed motion and Plexus has the quality of Pixillation, of jump cut, of extreme compression. A Polish mathematician, Klaus Wyborny, working in Hamburg, Germany, a number of years ago (and using a timing devise on his camera), automatically pixillated frames from Citizen Kane and compressed this famous film into three minutes! The result is a very short film that compresses the images to the extent that the people disappear and the images are transformed into an atomic type mushroom cloud with a peculiar black dot that seems like an insect flying in and out of the cloud. This is a transformation of the original

classic into a totally abstract process and sculptural vision. And that has been the Plexus Process, whether we have dealt with the theme of Dante's Purgatorio, with the symbolic universal Serpent and with Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The very idea of "Modern Art" has to do with this 'compressionistic' process, since time certainly speeded up psychologically and physically for the French Impressionists, who invented modern art by: Improvising, by having a speeded-up moment to moment interaction with the last brush stroke and with the reified overall effect. They did it to the extent that the real subject matter of all modern art becomes the process itself, and any visual subject matter really becomes a vehicle employed in this amazing compressionistic process. (The tail wags the dog).

No painter who has been sensitive and aware of "Whats been going on" has failed to be positively influenced by this direct improvised process. If we draw a line from the cubist space of Cezanne, we can extend this modern compass through Picasso and into the New York School of "Action-Painting," the so called Abstract Expressionism, especially early DeKooning. We can draw another line from Gaugin through Matisse and into Color Field painting, into more interactive color-shapes in space. This flattening out of the picture plane not only compresses space, but... returns it to a universal 'primitive' sense as envisioned by Gaugin and even Mark Rothko.

(if you have a guest and a host, then you have a GHOST... Marcel Duchamp)

Note to David Ecker, "Compressionisme," New York, 1989:

Compressionisme is caused by time speeded up in our unconsciousness. We are constantly compressing and fusing new forms, larger yet more complex forms from old ones.

Modern art fuses the conscious with the unconscious so impression plus reification plus process are added to the the dynamics of art. It is a new fused form. Picasso, using this new form fused the past with the present. We now have so much information that we are compressing it digitally into tiny computer chips capable of scoring billions of bits of info on a tiny compressed chip. All art forms are compressions, in that they use a unique shorthand to arrive at their metaforms.

A 4 line haiku can express eternity. One plus one equals three.

The plexus process is to combine, fuse these art forms. So we are fusing fusions, compressing compressions into a larger, more complex, more powerful network. By 1992, we will have gathered enough compression to explode intercontinentally (North America, Europe, Africa, South America).

Arturo Lindsay

Unpublished paper "The Ancestral Messenger's Conference Report," in reference to Plexus Black Box, A Multicultural Data Bank for La Caravella dell'Arte, a round Table held at Metateatro, Rome, on July 2, 1990.

On July 2, 1990, with an audience of artists from Europe, Africa, and the Americas, Plexus convened its first international conference. The panellists consisted of Dr. David Ecker, artist, director of ISALTA (International Society for the Advancement of Living Traditions in Art), co-cordinator of the 1992 Christopher Columbus Consortium, professor of art and art education, New York University; Dr. Okechukwu E. Odita, artist, member of the 1992 Christopher Columbus Consortium, professor of art and African History, Ohio State University; Dr. Arturo Lindsay, artist, scholar in residence, Franklin and Marshall College, Plexus-Atlanta, assistant professor, Spelman College, Atlanta; Dr. Frans Evers, artist, Plexus Amsterdam, professor, Laboratory of Plastic Sound, Royal Conservatory, The Hague, Holland; Mr. Fabrizio Bertuccioli, artist, Plexus Rome; Mr. Frank Sheefren, artist, Plexus-New York; Mr. Ciro Ciriaco, artist, Tempo Irreale, Rome; and Dr. Sandro Dernini, coordinator of the 1992 Christopher Columbus Consortium and originator of Plexus.

Each panelist made a presentation regarding his research, work and or vision of Plexus's future. Along with a discussion of my work with remote control drawing tools, as the Ancestral Messenger of Plexus, I assumed the responsibility of opening our channels of communication by providing each artists in the Plexus network with my vision for Plexus and the enclosed mailing list.

My vision for Plexus is to see artists use this mailing list to invite each other to work on international collaborative projects; and to share ideas and resources. I encourage my fellow panellists as well as every member of Plexus to make use of the mailing list to directly communicate with us. I have added to the list of participants at the conference in Rome, the names and address of several other artists who have participated in previous Plexus events.

Please forgive any inaccuracies in the mailing list. Misspelled names and address are largely due to my inability to read the artist's handwriting. Please type or print clearly all corrections as well as names of artists who were omitted and forward to Dr. Arturo Lindsay. I will update the mailing list once a year, or as needed, or as funds allow. The Ancestral Messenger "Definition" of Plexus:

The following is a more concrete description of the proposal I presented in Rome. Beginning with a biological definition of a plexus I propose we built an art definition of Plexus as a metaphor. As you will note in the art definition, I have written in italics (originally in bold) letters the transformation into metaphor.

Biological Plexus

The communication which takes place between two or more nerves form what is called a *plexus*. Sometimes a plexus is formed by the primary branches of the trunks of the nerves - as the cervical, brachial, lumbar, and sacral plexuses - and occasionally by the terminal funiculi, as in the plexuses formed at the periphery of the body. In the formation of a plexus the component nerves, then join, and again subdivide in such a complex manner that the individual funiculi becomes interlaced most intricately; so that each branch leaving a plexus may contain filaments from each of the primary nervous trunks which forms it. In the formation also of smaller plexuses at the periphery of the body there is a free interchange of the funiculi and primitive fibres. In each case, however, the individual filaments remain separate and distinct, and also do not inoculate with one another.

#### ART PLEXUS

The communication which takes place between two or more artists form what is called a *Plexus*. Sometimes a *Plexus* is formed by the primary branch (*Sandro*) - as a *Co-Opera*, a *Purgatorio Show*, or a *Christopher Columbus Project* - and occasionally by *local Plexuses*, as in the plexuses formed in *Amsterdam, Dakar, New York, Rome, Sardinia, Milano*, and soon *Atlanta*. In the formation of a plexus the component *artists* divide, then join, and again subdivide in such a complex manner that the individual *events* become interlaced most intricately, so that each branch leaving a plexus may contain filaments from each of the primary *aesthetic* trunks which form it. In the formation also of a smaller plexuses at the periphery of the body there is a free interchange of *artists*. In each case, however, the individual *artist* remains separate and distinct, *maintaining his/her own identity*, and do *not* inoculate with one another, *losing their individuality*.

Paolo Maltese

Paper "An Infinite Serpent," Milano, October 1987, published in *Passport for Plexus Serpent*, Cagliari, Celt Editions, 1987.

Einstein once stated: "The most beautiful experience one can have is the mysterious. It consists of fundamental emotion, the cradle of true Art and Science."

And the poet, Mario Luzi said, "Science accepts the idea of mystery rather than repel it. For a poet, the mysterious is a place from where to return to rationality, and from which doubts stem."

If today, philosophers have been beaten, artists continue to fight the mysterious, while great things are happening in Science, as presocratics, once used to do, following E. Zeller's time-scale.

Mystery-Reason: the artist at the confluence of these ever-changing words. PLEXUS is therefore a metaphors in which observations, analyses, discussions, reflections, actions, pilot-shows, stretched to encourage the

continuation of research, all come together, and like an infinite serpent rising up to tree of knowledge, renews unity and consistence to self-conscious and common research.

In this way, by adventuring into mists of metaphor, myth and archetypes, one is brought closer to the mysterious since the metaphor is enemy of appearance, is the damp earth, and is the roots.

Behind it lies the mystery of the future, the continuation of imaginary threads still be defined and fully elaborated, as PLEXUS looks for.

Thus, PLEXUS project does not set itself easy objectives, so in an Event of such vast size as that of Gavoi (Sardinia), and based on very ambitious goals, (but also still very uncertain), the danger of rhetoric, indefiniteness and superficiality continually remain a possible trap.

At this point Cicero springs to my mind, who used to ask himself, how soothsayers managed not to laugh when they met each other.

The Gavoi opportunity has been useful, useful because it allowed contacts and feed-backs between artists who came from different areas, and who did not know each other. Among these were the inhabitants of Gavoi, a town in the centre of the Barbagia of Sardinia that accepted what could be defined as being - for Gavoi - a challenge.

It was an important occasion for the inhabitant of Gavoi to reflect on what to do in the future, just as for PLEXUS to find proof for an interdisciplinary dialogue, got out from the usual artistic contexts (and scientific).

This is the point I should like to emphasise: that what happened in Gavoi could become "History," in other words it could be the catalyst of reflections for everybody, for PLEXUS, thoughts which in their turn produce more thoughts and future realities for everyone, all in a continual spiral (the serpent), towards a future growth which is "History."

Maria Pia Marsala

Transcript made of the interview made in her house, in Rome, in 1995.

I started to know about Plexus in 1987 in Rome during a press presentation at the Teatro in Trastevere. Slowly in 1989 I became involved as performer in 1992 Cristoforo Colombo: Viaggio nel Pianeta Arte, an art opera held at the Metateatro in Rome, in which I played the role of the Black Princess.

My participation was signed fully by my strong emotions and my passion to be an artist in the first person, with my own individual expression, within a collective work progress.

Plexus was an occasion for an artistic experience of confrontation with the others participants, performing and acting human life, within the whole context of life. My participation was a improvisation performance in which I played with all my emotions and impressions in a stage within a closed space. It was difficult for me to express artistically, in an harmonic way, myself as an artist, as I had learned until that moment as dancer and actress. There was no stage direction, there was no support of any kind to help us, to express ourselves. On stage everybody, as artists in the first person, performed their own personalities as acting characters, often in conflicts with the others+s one, representing the complex theme -The Voyage in the Planet of Art+ as an

interaction of different human beings with different points of view. Fully interactive were our meetings, before and after the show, with everybody, journalists, artists, scientists, writers, curious, to discuss their and our opinions about how to arrive to -Il Pianeta Arte+ as the only meaningful way to understand what we were doing there. We had several hard discussions and usual characteristics conflicts among all us, but these tensions created new materials, interacting with that show, which we developed in the Plexus events performed in 1990 and in 1991, and since the recent ones. We kept alive our intuition, during those discussions, in order to go deep and deep inside ourselves, to open our eyes, our hearts, our minds, playing, as only children can play, with total love.

My experience was strongly lived and it is related to my own individual experience as a researcher of true global love and harmony.

I would like to recall as a meaningful part of my continuous experience with Plexus Black Box, from its opening performance in 1989, in Rome, at Metateatro, until to its closing in 1993, in New York, at the Rosenberg Gallery, that in Plexus there are not visible elements which oblige you/us to use intuition to feel them, like for example, when in 1989 at Metateatro Plexus Black Box hold surreally a music note played by Giancarlo Schiaffini inside a container representing Plexus Black Box, and then all of us moved through +la porta del cuore+ with a magic word: "I am" and by our own name. We ended that performance by laughing and by presenting to the audience a Plexus Campbell Soup Can as an artwork.

Assane M'Baye

Written recollection made in Dakar, in 1994, translated by the researcher.

The Living Plexus Black Box: Art, Well Being and Reconciliation

First, I would like to thank the GOOD LORD and his son Prophet MOHAMMED to have allowed to figure the name of our venerable religious chief, founder of the Mouridism CHEICH AHMADOU BAMBA on the page of The Living Plexus Black Box: Art, Well Being and Reconciliation. Dr. Sandro Dernini.

I make to the memory of our deceased brother and friend Langouste MBow a compassionate prayer "Earth be light to him", for all activities of Plexus Dakar. Bring Your Serpent.

All life is a mission, to not say that it is a personal effort within the whole society, little or large.

Cheik Ahmadou Bamba in his time has been a high reconciler of esprits and culture. During his exile of seven years, seven months, seven days, he wrote seven tons of litanies (khassayide) rich of metaphors all centered on the GOOD LORD, the Prophet and on the man.

We learn that the real war of the man, it is not "Le Djade" (The Holy War) but a truly fight on ourselves.

"Work, as if you never die and pray, as if you have to die tomorrow" (Cheik Ahmadou Bamba). We thank you a lot Cheik Ahmadou Bamba.

"SA DJAN WATHIANA" is a diction in our Wolof language, a metaphor which means "your serpent is descended." It is a custom to say it, after to have accomplished a good mission.

Dr. Sandro Dernini we thank you and we give you the power and authorization to do what it is right for a good realization of your honorable mission. SA DJAN WATHIANA.

The events to which I participated in the project of Plexus International are in effect multiple and different, both in idea and in action, realized with many difficulties, without money, with hard and very limited wealth from our side. It is at the cultural center Malic Sy, Dakar, during a conference made by Dr. Sandro Dernini with the participation of the director of the Italian Cultural Institute, where I had my first contact in 1986 and 1987 with Plexus International. He spoke, with an American-Italian accent, about the electromagnetic serpent and of science, by which I was delightful very much that day.

It was from the departure of that moment that I started to work very hard on the project (Bring Your Serpent) "Time-Art Ningki-Nangka," the metaphor of the serpent, Plexus art co-opera.

With a great surprise by the artists of Dakar, I saw myself to be invited in Italy. I would like to say, that I always dreamed to go in Europe. The dream was concretized, I was with 160 artists of 23 nationalities, arrived on July 4, 1987, in Sardinia, Gavoi, for the first international market of slaves of art, -Il Serpente di Pietra+, Plexus Art Co-Opera ní 4, held in a megalithic sanctuary at the center of the Mediterranean sea, the hearth and as well as the lung of the Western culture, linked by an European and American group, Dax Digital Art Exchange, of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh (USA) with the intelligently equipped computers by Prof. Franco Meloni of the Department of Physics of the University of Cagliari in Italy.

It was from the departure of this first experience which allowed myself to travel beyond the frontiers of our country and of our continent that I was motivated to enforce the activities of Plexus International in order to be able to continue the art Co-Opera Ní5 and consequently to arrange better in direction of the FESPAC 88 of Dakar, which sadly did not happen.

In December 1987 after my return in Dakar, at the Auditorium of the National Institute of Popular and Sportive Education, at the Stadium Iba Mar Diop, in Dakar, we organized a round-table about the theme "The Popularization of Art and of the Artists of All World," chaired by Dr. Sandro Dernini with the majority of the guests made by artists with the presence of Abdoul Magib Dia, rappresentant of the Mayor of the City of Dakar, and of Prof. Youssouph TraorÃ, president of the Club Litteraire David Diop, who introduced the debate.

It was a date which has to be kept in the history of Plexus because we have done a good departure in direction of the City Authorities of Dakar.

Dakar-Plexus behind to be a strategic point between North and South and New York, Sardinia, Rome, Amsterdam, Dakar-Plexus movement goes to bring its serpent with a large "S." Goree is the symbol of a suffering history, the slavery and the negro trade made the opening of the Atlantic sea and the invention of the "New World."

All has begin from this, (door without return) today, as you say, we want to pass the limits of space-time, in the research of new dimensions throughout the ocean of art with new means of communication and of science.

This voyage reintroduces us in an adventure without limits.

Plexus Dakar invites you to travel with its own history.

In the House of the Slaves, Goree, on August 26, 1988, we launched an open letter to the artists of the world to announce the arrival of the ship of the slaves of art, which was previewed from December 23, 1988, to January 3, 1989.

In the context of this encounter the artists have been invited to participate to the realization of the Art Co-Opera Ní5 "The Electromagnetic Serpent Ningki-Nangka and the Exile of Cheik Ahmadou Bamba", a sinchronized and simultaneous presentation of art and science, which will be realized under the form of a parade spectacle in the island of Goree, in occasion of the second event of Plexus International, with a ritual ceremony made by the recovery of

the sculpture of Arturo Lindsay, buried in the sacred land of Goree, to give a great homage to the memory of the Diaspora, against racism and in the name of freedom of art.

We wait with a great hope the international fond of art under the flag of universal reconciliation and we wait the arrival of the real ship of the former slaves of art on board the Elisabeth.

Paper “A Brief Radiography of Plexus Dakar”, made in Dakar on 1990 as answer to Franco Meloni’s Plexus Black Box Open Call, Cagliari, 1989; translated from French by the researcher.

The experience that I had drawn within these two past years, from 1987 to 1988, is made upon a radiography, this means upon an analysis and a diagnosis on the gathering of situations which Plexus has met with us in Dakar, within an open circle of people, unfolded to the world, but also insulated, where Art saw the first day of its deep roots.

Africa, nest of the Civilization of the Humanity, seems to be forgotten or not well understood by our confreres of the North.

If we today should accept Plexus as a miraculous system of communication for the development of cultural exchanges within different cultures for the benefit of an Universal Civilization, it should be necessary, in the beginning, to take into the account relationships and essential means of these different cultures which reflect themselves at the level of their own current development towards more the Western culture than our.

I think well that Plexus is a nice and good Western or American idea. It is an apple which comes from you, but not from Africa, and Plexus is not the sun with thousands rays.

It is the reason by which Plexus looks to us “depassé” elapsed or badly understood by the group of Dakar or for the default of an organization plan or still rather for the harmful consequences of the FESPAC 88 which finally was dropped out by the organizers. What was left was only the improvisation by the side of Dr. Sandro Dernini. In effect it was failed to do anyway something in the place of the FESPAC, this created to my opinion a big misunderstanding within the artists of Dakar.

The information did not pass within them, they have not absolutely understood anything, they were fixed more on the level of personal complaints rather than on the artistic and scientific expression of Plexus itself.

I pull off your attention, dear friend, on the very fragile resources of the artists of Dakar, they have almost nothing, and they lay as misunderstood in the little city of Dakar and in Gorée. They have fear to adventure themselves abroad within new systems of artistic expression. “Slaves of Art.”

Another point need to be underlined which is that of information and above all of the communication, because we have a problem of times and distances, which it makes the use of communication very expensive in Dakar and which asks a great capital of money.

To my opinion these are somehow the very important factors to be kept in consideration in reference to the Black Box and to the future of Plexus, in

order that the Government or goodwill people of Dakar may give their full contribution, without difficulty.

I pull off your attention, one more time, dear friend, to make you understanding Africa is an old and tired land that needs help to go up psychologically and materially.

Anyway these two past years for me have been rich of experiences and they allowed me to know my own mistakes in the field of public relations, and above all on the plan of organization and method.

I have the feeling that you are our privileged partners which was concretized by your great contribution in artistic matter which never will forget and which will constitute for us a treasure, a force, a motivation to communicate with the rest of the world with peace.

Without to forget your presence, your daughter Valeria in Dakar, at Gorée, and the forever presence of your excellent and invisible Anna Saba who will always rest with the precious stone of our deep memory, inspiring us for a better exposition of tomorrow, for Plexus afterwards, thanks to Anna Saba, without forgetting other people and artists of Sardinia.

Paper “Le Serpent Ningki-Nangka,” published in Passport for Plexus Serpent, Cagliari, Celt Editions, 1987:

Plexus invites you to travel to Dakar through a journey of the mind of our times by the invisible Serpent Ningki-Nangka into the fog of the metaphor, into the animism, the ancient Negro-African religion that is not by magic or by fetishism, but by an authentic African way to communicate to the Universe and to spirituals forces.

This vital energy is only an emanation of the divine power and manifests the African inner sensibility to be able to feel animals, stars, the moon, the sun and everythings in us and in the world fully in mutation.

Ningki-Nangka is a compression of time, space and of relativity, between East and West, South and North.

It is a metaphor, a star of poetry, of epic song, of art, of music and of light. “Un arc en ciel” coming from the richness of our soul built on the vital strength of our faith.

For the name of Winnie Mandela, of all oppressed, of all women, for all children, for love and peace.

From the tam-tam the sun of the new world will rise.

Luigi Mazzarelli

Unpublished paper “Open Letter to Sandro Dernini”, Cagliari, June 1988, translated from Italian by the researcher:

Dear Sandro,

in decoding your “Plexus Strategic Map”, doubts surpass certainties. It is a good sign. Plexus Manifest, opening itself, as the graphic which express it, on all spatial directions is a sign of these times. I would wish it were less. Many suggestions affascinate me (the international circuit of art managed by the artist in the first person; the myth as the re acquisition of the artist in a world from which was alienated; the metaphor as travelling factory; art as gratuity and opportunity of intersubjective exchanges behind the specific of the artistic language; the relation among artists of different nationalities and cultures etc. Nevertheless as I said questions and perplexities are not few, starting from the problem of the organization. The hard experience of Thelema, taught me that when a specific community of intellectuals and artists who sets as essential support to their own relationships a “freedom request,” it must know to develop at the same time a balanced form of organization (or not organization) if it does not like to have painful experiences. It is not easy.

From “the Manifest of the Communist Party” of 1848 to the freedom requests of the students cultural revolutions of 1968, the need of free human exchange, in the concreteness of its own historical development, repeated one thousand times under diverted directions the centrality of the patriarchal organization from which it tried to get free. There is a reason of course in this fatal repetition of the historical experience. Probably the need to channelize creative energies of community members and to counterbalance together centrifugal pushes made up by libidinal impulses and or by individuals’ power addressed unwarily to the ruin of the cohesion and of the collective projectuality of the community, it brings fatally to the opponent side. In other words a balanced form of cohesistence between CENTRALITY and FREEDOM, from the point of the organizative view, does not have a satisfactory answer in history. This should let understand to have not too many illusions when this problem again shows itself: we know that also a non organization under any title shows up itself may generate monstrosity not less than a centralized organization.

About this point it should be opportune to discuss for long time in the group, we should force ourselves to have a constant reference to our praxis to not allow ourselves to go out of the roads more or less by purely verbal suggestions contained inevitably in the hypothesis package of the departure. And nevertheless, there is no doubts, the request of freedom is an essential condition of how art poses itself and to which anyway it is necessary to give space. To repropose with strength this need, Plexus is right. But the point that for me, in this moment is urgent, it is another. It regards a very controversial question for which Plexus paid until now a high price.

In the Plexus Manifest among others, there is this statement “Art is where is and not What is” which has a great conceptual density. I cannot exclude that because of this reason, it easily allows misunderstandings if as I am afraid this concept is connected for relationship more or less close with the DADA praxis. We have without doubts in the Appointing of Duchamp its more direct historical reference and the more probable reading key.

As it is known the appointing represented in the history of art a decisive jump of quality which brought to the extreme consequences the lost of the linguistic

specificity of art already started with the Cubism and the functionalist movements in early years of the XX Century. Through the appointment to decide of the artistic value of a given object or given event it is not anymore its historical linguistic specificity, contained no separable in its inner formal structure or if you prefer its aesthetic quality, but the simple “additamento” (appointing).

Therefore it is decided by the person who officiates the object or the event in which it is placed.

Rather than it is decided for it by the generic artistic intentionally of whom is officiating the rite of the “additamento” or of the “re-knowing”.

For example the mythic urinal of Duchamp was artistic because it was out of context respect its original environment and out of function regards to its use value. That is it was placed in a place (an art gallery) already by itself “deputato” to confer licences of artistic value to any kind object which was exposed intentionally within its walls. Naturally with the appointment the artistic object loses its intrinsic use value and of communicative, relational, semiologic exchange value, if you wish, when you like. But Duchamp did not invented anything: already since long time before the commodity colonized this new realm of art. In other words, the aesthetics, the value, the thingness of the work, the original and intentional meaning of the message, the QUALITY and every thing else we used to associate to the work of art were reduced from this moment to little less or little more, in a sigh.

Amen.

After such a event of this amount we are not worried if the line opened by the new praxis of making art, the object of art loses all its linguistic and communicative autonomy while it grows at the same time the importance of the intentional act of the maker and its existential weight.

The object is just little more than an opportunity to insert breaking occasions by the officiant on the scenery, sometimes with all the weight of his body presence (think to the Body Art for example) therefore the subject takes the place of the object. “L’Arte é dov’è e non cos’è”.

There where there is as we saw its officiant who puts off the rite of commemoration “corpore presenti”(present body) for its premature disappearance.

Have we to interpret in this way recent Plexus performances in Sardinia with what more flatly revival was reserved by the neodada practices: from Poor Art to the late experiences of Land Art and that was possible to find?

I am afraid that to motivate these ways of making art were in some ways the same theoretical papers of Plexus which probably because they are necessarily crowded within a contracted form in a very short space offer spaces for more current interpretations or if its allowed to me for some “boutade” very chip in the second hand market of the “americanerie”.

Sincerely the steps of Plexus Manifest that I am going to quote behind the fact that are rich of poetic suggestions and clearly linked to urgent and concrete problems they do not contribute to leave out some doubts while anyhow they solicit some kindly ironic shafts:

“The live TV news becomes the only acknowledged reality in the world.”

“The individual must make himself fitting and predictable if he hopes for a place in a world where every fantasy has found its justification.”

“Whoever engages in art-making has to adopt toward the present time the attitude implied by the concept of the artistic work’s gratuitousness. Art is the “need to exercise humanity” without hoping for fame, without falling into worry about the future and into anxiety to succeed, to grow attached to a piece of work, to suffer the limitations of reason, to lose sight of life.”

“The artist today..., mustn’t make use of his imagination only in the making of his work. He has to use it also in his everyday life,... thus accepting other people’s creative energies as well as his own.”

Franco Meloni

Written recollection made in Cagliari, in 1994.

PLEXUS = kB ln W

When the hopes seemed to be still compatible with a normal life, the distinction between Art and Science seemed surmountable after a careful definition of terms. Difficult, but not impossible.

PLEXUS had the useful characteristics for a research with joyful aspects. We played without well knowing which were the stakes, and there always are. We had to look for personifications to be followed in order to cover a role. The scripts weren't always respected. The subjects was fleetingly indefinite. The scientific matrix was proved by many rationality peaks. Acting in history - either capital or small letter - we could feel the possible implications. The different potential openings regarded problems thought in solitude but discussed between many. And all of this, unavoidably, seen with eyes more and more tired of human errors.

We needed greater synthesis efforts in order to define PLEXUS. Art and Science was not enough, Freedom was imperfectly vague, Artist "in the first person" made one think at barren personalism, Antilibretto brought back necessarily to previous experiments. But the accidental or wanted interaction with others forced to change the relations with the outside, or the inside, that regarded us. The solicitations were strong, but had to be supported both by a credibility and by a continued research of transforming stimulus.

Now the game was seen from the inside. In the series of fleeting focalizations of PLEXUS, it seemed necessary a further definition of one's own outlook on the problem.

Having necessarily to put together scientific concepts with Art images, it seemed inevitable to run back to the one period of human history about which judgements agree on estimation of values: the Renaissance.

It was possible because of the genetic connections to identify in the problem of the Flagellation paving reconstruction a way to deal, in an apparently operative way, with the combination of different cultures. Not being enough Piero, we wanted further on to represent one's vision of the problem with a kind of stamp what would define PLEXUS once for all: kB ln W. The operation seemed completed, the explanation left to others.

The definitions are always incomplete. To imply in equations concepts that regard multiple interactions, requires an ability of synthesis, and a comprehension that usually is out of the normal experiences.

Physics teaches that simplicity, refinement and wealth of some formulas causes an almost sensual pleasure in dimly seeing the route that had

determined its concise completeness. It would be as looking at a river's mouth, while going up the water-course to the source and seeing the reflection of every single wave.

The problems are always very complex and it demonstrates a human but not always verified need, wanting to delimitate them in enclosures rationally or schematically defined.

PLEXUS is consequently hardly definable.

The interaction is complicated by the presence of necessary and fundamental human factors. If it is difficult to give order to the atoms, it is incredibly more complex to deal with feelings. And PLEXUS is full of these.

It is impossible to analyse it from the inside. The position in the scenery requires that a physicist - after all a man of science - expresses itself according to schemes that the others are expecting from him.

In this situation, forced to explain tangibly my role, I had necessarily to give the clearest possible idea of the reason why I was interested in PLEXUS and above all the way I thought about it.

Avoiding an abused broadcast-fascinating language, I thought that entropy could be used: an image-creating-image happily used many times in physics.

Once more a concept apparently known is used to introduce the problem.

Like other times entropy is useful to lead the way to reasoning that will later develop along routes before unforeseeable. Then in a particular scenery - and here the explanations would get entangled in skeins of the previous experiences - we enunciate the equality between a thermodynamically important quantity - a real solid bridge between the microscopic and the macroscopic - and a movement that involves different competencies and interests.

Very nice picture. But unsatisfactory. For many reasons: because the definition is good for closed systems; because the molecules don't think and people do; because it is impossible to measure the thermodynamic probability of a dynamic system with a variable density outside a laboratory.

But, even if the formula is not true, it is interesting to see its limits and the possible alterations, or only the criticism.

The system is not closed, and it would be absurd if it was. Therefore the inquiry is shifted in a field even more interesting - Boltzmann will forgive me - of the preceding one.

We enter in the complexity's world, ruled by laws of the chaos. Fascinating. Therefore we draw advantages from a wrong initial statement. Beside we can understand that an immediate transportation of concepts and valid definitions in the severe field of physics speculations in different environments can cause some problems at least of consistency.

But this is positive if we see it as an increase of the limits of language validity.

But how it is possible to extend concepts out of one's existence world, when we know that even in the whole of relevance exist some undecidable sentences? After that the undertermination principle was surmounted with enormous labour, we relapse inexorably in cruel limitations of the Godel's Theorem.

But, as well as the Heisenberg's Principle shows the limits and the contradictions that derive from wanting to transfer directly - without any verifications of compatibility - concepts valid for the macroscopic world in the microscopic one - so different - the Godel's Theorem deprives us of the last great certitude: the separation between the rational: Mathematics, and the non-rational: Art.

It is not so easy to surmount the difficulties derived from the apparent absence of the first points. In Physics we learned to live together with concepts distant from common sense, and then why shouldn't they be so?. In Mathematics we got the reassuring certitude that the scientific research will never have an end.

The metastructures refer to the research of new box opening combinations connected tighter and tighter in a continuous research that finds its reason from the same existence of complexity. But it is true, and I believe so, that the most important thing is the way and not the goal, the discussion of formulas, of codification, of definitions, is after all more important than the subject of the research itself.

The Art & Science does not exist, but it is fundamental to talk about it.

PLEXUS is a box, more or less big, contained in another one distinguished with difficulty from it. Nobody knows its exact dimension, but it is possible that his entropy, and his energy also, is potentially very big. The connections are more important of the content.

PLEXUS as entropy and therefore as information.

Piero della Francesca as the vision of the Global Man.

1492 not as the death of Piero, but as the year of Lorenzo dei Medici.

The political vision as a means that allows information to have the power and the duty to circulate without any filter.

If this is urged by PLEXUS, it is not essential to give it a closed codification.

The Pupil asks: Master, is it possible to define PLEXUS?

The Master answers:

PLEXUS is in you.

PLEXUS is out of you.

One of these answers is undecidable.

September 1st, a week before Sarajevo.

Paper “Global Navigations”, published in the booklet *The Well Being in the XXIst Century*, Cagliari, by the Interdepartmental Well Being Center of the University of Cagliari, 1995.

Global Navigations. A name that inspires spaces, borders and possible targets. A name that represents a step in the evolution of an attempt to compare different cultures and peoples. Any of them with a proper character, to obtain a vision more complete to solve some problems always present with their fascinating complexity. The big discovers and the reached aims make confident in a possible progress of all the social components through a progressive improvement of our way of living. But if an insight of the new poverty fixes one dollar as a daily resource of billion people today, with which false security is it possible to face the solution of an equal distribution of the richness when enormous differences concern the lives of a lot of people. The methods, the weapons the determinate will to act can and must come from the right components though of as critical consciousness of the society. First among them the University, for the knowledge that should represent and for the mixing of cultural relationships that could realise. Art should have the same importance if we think that only with a complete connection of reasons and feelings it is possible to realise unthinkable projects.

For Art and Science is written on the main entrance of the Cooper Union School of Architecture in New York, and the memory goes to the speech about the freedom of slaves by Abraham Lincoln. In the same sense of this speech, supported by reason for a fair human cause, the research trail of the right instruments to modify and to interpret the reality around us must be based on a scenario that can change name, and from PLEXUS we can arrive to Well Being, but must maintain coherently the route that through tracings in

the mind and in the time not always linear, takes to the definition of the proper responsible role in the life.

Paper "Mail Computer Serpent," published in Passport for Plexus Serpent, Cagliari, Celt Editions, 1987.

A system which transmits information without intermediaries, conditioning, or censure by any power whatever, where a fact may be presented as it was intended by its conceiver, free from encumbering interpretative explanations - this is without a doubt the most productive weapon against the frustrating solitude of every author.

And the system does exist: a network of computers which connects the knowledge-producing centers of the whole world. It can be the most useful way to not only exchange data but to close the gap and make ties stronger between all those interested in culture-related work.

One of the most wonderful experiences during the Plexus Meeting in July was meeting artists already "met" through the electronic mail system - the VAX at Cagliari's Department of Physics. There were people from DAX - Digital Art Exchange of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, along with poets who had transmitted ancient legends from Australia, while Kassel and Wales were on the line. And all this in Gavoi, Barbagia (Sardinia).

The world can be smaller, not only in the field of Science, but, and perhaps with better results, in the field of Art as well.

From an unpublished paper "Paradox," 1989, Physics Department of University of Cagliari, Sardinia.

Any serious consideration of PLEXUS must take into account the distinction between the objective reality, which is independent of any theory, and the physical concepts with which the theory operates."

Why to use a fundamental article at the basis of the unsolved questionable dispute between the probabilistic exponents of the Copenhagen School, and the deterministic scientists, Einstein *et al.*, to introduce a discussion concerning PLEXUS? To gain credibility, for example. And because of the intimate fashion that I see looking to problems involving few definite positions and many possible developments able to augment our desire to implement connections between different domains of knowledge.

The most exciting and sometime appealing question I have ever heard in these two years of activity in PLEXUS concerns my position as scientific entity in the not-ever-clear artistic movement. Generally, - What is PLEXUS? and what is your position in it? - is a very intriguing statement, mainly because of the complexity of the answer.

I have tried many times to avoid a clear definition, but a night, forced by Sandro, a kind of equation came out in the form:  $PLEXUS = kB \ln \frac{1}{2}$

There is a strong influence in this late-night output due to my old love for Boltzmann and for the implication that the true formula, where  $PLEXUS = S$ , the entropy of the system, had for the developments of Physics in many

directions. It is very easy to connect the statement to many concepts in some way related to PLEXUS:

- i) there is the sense of the whole system as composed by separate but important parts: the artist in the first person;
- ii) there is the answer concerning the system as open or not, and the consequent entropy increment, with or without critical filters;
- iii) there is the close connection with the freedom of and in communication, Shannon relations of 1948 defining information as the difference of entropy before and after a message, and PLEXUS concerns also information;
- iv) there is in general the relationship between order and disorder;
- v) there is something of artistic in the definition of non-deterministic entities, in a sense exciting as von Neuman said on the term entropy related to information: "...no one knows what entropy really is, so in a debate you will always have the advantage.";
- vi) PLEXUS needs creative concepts, and with logical Ralston matrices also a little of statistical mechanics may aid to increase the number of connective sensations among us."

From a letter to David W. Ecker, Cagliari, March 13, 1990:

Dear David,

It is a pleasure for me to continue our long-distance dialogue on some common arguments of interest.

In a sense, PLEXUS means connections and transmission of knowledge. In particular, remembering once more the absolute necessity to connect our places of work by computer electronic mail, I want to continue to play with the Black Box.

First of all, we must give a definition of it.

The Black Box has been created in order to survive. To survive against the complexity of the problems that made uncontrolled the route toward a common goal. To survive against the egoism of many of the participants to the project. To survive against the responsibility of the ambitious target, more or less future. To survive against the fragmentation of the different objectives of PLEXUS.

In this way, the Black Box, represents a quiet place created to discuss the situation according to a scientific method.

But, is it possible to do it? Clearly not. To go back to play, I think that it is denied by arguments based on Godel considerations. To be clear, for the fact that the Black Box is a superstructure of PLEXUS, but all of us are contemporary in the two. And seems that the process should go to infinity in creating spirally involved superstructures. It is impossible to assume a position totally external, in physical and in human sense, that could allow a scientific, unperturbed and unperturbing vision of this - but not only this - reality. This is a problem concerning the thesis work of Sandro too. His job is practically impossible to be brought to a definite end for his intimate involution in the problem. It is like a kind of symbiotic process between PLEXUS and Sandro that makes hard to individuate the subject and the object

of the analysis. And this is strongly exciting. It resembles some situations in the interactive process of the measure, according the quantum mechanics, of microscopic entities.

Now, how to solve the problem?

In physics we proceed by putting in an organized way the results of the experimental tests. For the Black Box we need, first of all, to create a chronological order in order to fix some well defined coordinates. And this is what you suggest for the Sandro's thesis. All the possible developments should come as a consequence of this first task. We must then collect our energies to meet together to find the right answers for our problem.

William Parker

Paper "Introduction," from the Bill Collector Newsletter, republished in the Plexus Passport, New York, 1992, by José Rodriguez.

It is the role of the artist to dance, sing, shout and whisper about all that is wonderful, beautiful and majestic. To mirror and project the present and future, to tell us the stories inside little childrens' hearts (giving us a view beyond the horizon). Communicating by the language of stone, wood, wool and language of happiness, sadness and joy.

It is the role of the artist to incite political, social and... spiritual revolution. To awaken us from our sleep and never let us forget our obligations as human beings.... To light the fire of human compassion. When this inner flame is burning man is uplifted to another state, his vision and sense are doubled he sees, hears and feels things he never did before. The heat of the earth, the cry of living beings. This fire is stoked by conviction, caring... communication with others.

The idea is to live strongly within this vision without compromises even after being met by a cold grey world that could care less about vision, a world that makes insensitivity and murder of idealism and individualism a standard.

It is the role of the artist to become a human being to see that the only art is the art of living, the artist must quickly make the transformation to human being and in the same breath come to realize he or she is a vehicle through which light passes. We can flow and sing with this reality.

Being a great artist is not enough. One must be obsessed with the vision of life. Art must transform to reality to a healing ritual a ceremony of the inner voice that says the only tradition is the tradition of life and living things, the tradition of the selfbeing created each moment. The masterpiece must constantly be created. Every year more creative beings have gone into the business of entertainment to make a dollar. They make their music weaker for the sake of popularity, why not make it stronger for the sake popularity?

America was founded and is run on a palette of untruths and illusions in every area of life (War is though of as real while peace is a dream).

Art can clarify life or it can help to reconfirm these lies. It's not...a matter of just staying alive and existing but living as full creative beings, beings who take the step not when it is safe or out of survival but as a process of living. The way trees grow and the way flowers just appear out of nowhere.

Most books and gestures about music, dance, painting, film, and the other art forms have rarely been written by the artist themselves...Art as life in America is defined and...controlled by either the capitalist or the scientist, the curiosity seekers who play games with life. To these people art is an ornament they look and promote music and dance that is technically polished, slick and does everything art is supposed to be according the guidelines of the 80's. They never really believe that art can change the heart of man. To the theoretician and the intellectual art is never expected to be reality, this is what makes art, art. They will not accept the idea that life is more important than art and that for any creative work to be valid on the same level as life that work must sing and swing from an unearthly reality.

All the controlling factors of the world of the arts are a mirror of the controlling powers of the world (AMERICA). The European Western capitalist. The Afro-American creative music since its reception in the United States, has been uprooted from ritual and healing to the status of entertainment. Watered down, raped and pillaged by the money vendors and the so called jazz lovers to meet their own needs. The black musician provides the creativity, the capitalist producer control it, creating an industry off of not the meat of the music but off of the embellishment presenting the music on lesser terms making it more palatable. The real music as any real art causes change, it asks man to question and not to live with lies and injustices. We have entered the 80's with our eyes still red from the sleepiness of the 70's. America is a deep sleep, the revolution of today consists of machines replacing people and people acting like machines, dancing robots and digital watches. This is the age of electronics and instant death. Acoustic human energy is frowned upon, everyone is trying to take the easy way out. No longer can the creative musician sit back and let others define him, he is labelled and catalogued, interviewed, produced, recorded, bought and sold by people with tin ears and souls. If the musician believes in life then he must define himself and not be manipulated. The Bill Collector is a newsletter written by the artist who wishes to define and share his existence with others, in what is once again a move toward self-determination.

Frank Pio

Transcript of the interview made by the researcher in New York, in 1994. It is approved by Frank Pio.

I co-curated the last Plexus Black Box show at Rosenberg Gallery and my role was to organize the spiritual ritual elements of the show.

My participation was also to re-activate the spiritual components of the Plexus Black Box which were lacking in strength and my pieces on the Madonna and Angels was about it.

I like to recall the opening ritual of the show in which the most important part was the ritual aspect of it.

Most people did not understand initially so many texts. The ritual to take everybody outside.

Plexus Black Box was about all this information and about Sandro's dissertation.

Plexus as community-based art organization was dealing with Plexus Black Box on the issue of the reconciliation through art in the community.

Plexus Well Being and Reconciliation is some how for my interpretation a way to communicate, to create a dialogue how we can interact together around the world. My vision was related to universal aspects of the planet as it was stated by Marshall McLuhan.

The Plexus Black Box was brought back to the community to avoid to continue to be contaminated by the academic institution because there was no interests of dialogue with the Lower East Side Community.

The students of current issues in art education were invited to participate in the show and to discuss what they experienced there. It became an issue of current issue of art education because of its institutional standard setting. The cards of curriculum game were placed in the show as introduction to an art community-based art education program.

During the 2 week of events of the Plexus Black Box there was a community-based participation.

Rolando Politi

Unpublished paper "Plexus Art Cartel", New York, May 1987.

Sandro, organize Plexus like a Club Card Carring.

The Board is international, legalize it in Switzerland, Panama or Bahamas.

Information is electronic (Hard copy optional) through an Art/Science Network

Your Board invests into the frame, the cards, etc.

Plexus Board is not-for profit, because you are fostering a science and culture co-operation network.

In other words what it costs you to set the system is what you should ask for from a variety of "fund benefactors."

The Plexus Card Members must pay a fee - to gain access to the network.

The artist in the First Person must make an investment just like investments are made in paper and pencils, but you must give them something better than xerox copies and loose sheets.

You will be successful in selling many plastic Plexus Cards, once you organize the information subjects for quick access.

Now here is the Big Point.

You as the Plexus Board must establish an international legal and copyright monitoring unit.

The information should be accepted in the bank unless it is screened (copyright) and verified to be the true and original source of that specific artist/scientist in the first person. You will get the trust of the card members by establishing such a unit.

Also if any work is sold as a result of the network, Plexus is entitled to a % of the profit (agreement to be signed before one becomes a card member).

Also events staged as a result of Plexus Networking must have the Plexus name clearly in evidence.

You don't want a fee for events because you are needed to generate sales and they may show profits or losses.

But you are entitled to fee for sales of work by the artist in the first person.

Your Network will put in direct contact sellers and buyers.

Unpublished paper "Proposal for Plexus International as a Sweat Equity Cartel" made in New York, on February 10, 1992, by Rolando Politi, Plexus 43, New York.

Plexus International as a "Sweat Equity Cartel of Art" is a beautiful creative tool for a paternity of "the artists in the first person" to exchange his own work without filters or barriers.

The "Open Market" eventually will recognize the Cartel, particularly when the issue is the international debt of the Third World vs. the First World, and the role of the artists in the first person for a world route correction in the use of human resources.

The currency unit of exchange in the cartel is the "Plexonian" which is equivalent to one ECU (European Currency Unit), one dollar is about one and half ECU.

The Plexonian was designed by Micaela Serino in Rome in 1991 as her contribution to the development of the "Plexus Black Bag" project.

The Plexonian money will be printed in a limited edition to support the Cartel and the voyage of the Elisabeth from Sardinia to Gorée, Dakar. The Plexonians will be certified by Plexus International Storage and delivered to Plexus Dakar in order to be presented to the Minister of Culture of Senegal for the approval of the Government in support of the Plexus project of the opening of Plexus World Art Bank in Gorée, Dakar.

To get some amount of Plexonians it is necessary to donate to the Plexus Cartel of "Sweat Equity" an equivalent amount of value in labour or art works, in reference to building the Art Bank.

Example:

Sandro, Plexus 23s, buys a "Robotcap 3," an original certified Plexus art work by Rolando, Plexus 43, for 1000 Plexonians.

"Robotcap 3" will receive the certificate of original Plexus work by Plexus International Storage after the Storage has received from Plexus 43 all documentation of that specific art work and verified with the monitoring unit that the member has full credit for what presented as true source of it.

Plexus 23s has available an amount of Plexonians against a quantity of labour made by him in support of the Cartel's activities.

Plexus 23s pays in cash 1000 Plexonians to Plexus 43.

Rolando will have credit inside the network of the Cartel to buy for an amount of 1000 Plexonians a quantity of products or labours listed in the "Plexus Black Bag," the shopping tool for the members of the cartel and diffused through internet within the "Plexus Black Box".

Plexus members will receive a plastic card membership with a personal ID. number, which will allow to have access to the Cartel's activities and to receive the last news with a list of the new works offered and of what was sold, with relative bids (quotations) in Plexonian currency.

How to become a member of the Plexus cartel?

Unpublished paper "Plexus International Network", made in New York, in 1992, by Plexus 43 in collaboration with Plexus 23s.

Plexus International Network is the tool we use to create "value" and is available only to Plexus members.

Einstein theorised: "Energy is neither created nor destroyed, it is only transferred" and you as the artist in the first person must initially invest "creative time" measured with "sweat equity" into the network and reinvest the "values" (Plexonian money) received for the initial work back into the network. You and each and every member keeps on reinvesting into the Web until such time as your work is demanded by the outside market and you decide to exchange (sell) it for hard currency (real money).

At this point in time your work leaves the network and you give to Plexus a % of the hard currency. (Sometimes, there could be as many as three layers of commissions of % to be involved in this selling process)

These commissions from the different entities involved will be in exchange for the value created by the network in launching your work.

Plexus Art Bank, in Gorée, Dakar, will issue the Plexonian money in exchange of a 1% or 2% commission of its face value.

One Plexonian will be equivalent to an hard currency.

Plexus Black Bag, in Rome, is the marketing arm of the network and will receive a commission to be determined individually and when "works" are sold for hard currency through this arm.

Plexus International Passport, in New York, is the newsletter of the network.

In each issue, the newsletter will list works offered and sold including the list of their latest Plexonian value. This system will work like the "Bid/Ask System" used in all the counter financial markets.

It is important to remember that between members you can only trade in Plexonians, no hard currency. Continuous trade between members is therefore always encouraged. Obviously any work will have ultimately a realistic chance to be sold in the outside market if it achieves a magical balance between inside and outside market dynamics. It is important to remember also that you as "the artist in the first person" do really and truly control the entire

toy mechanism. Trades and contributions of sweat equity and creative time will also be printed in this newsletter.

Plexus International Storage, in Cagliari, Sardinia, will certify and document your work as true and original. It will act as a screening agent. Documents and works can periodically be used to organize shows and travelling exhibitions. In essence the Storage will act as a promotional tool to generate interest and value.

These four bodies are the major pillars upon which this international network can be built.

You can leave the network at any time. Just do not renew your membership and removed your work from the Storage and therefore from "Plexus Black Bag". You cannot however have back the value of your sweat equity contribution out of the network in Plexonian or in hard currency. You will leave it as your contribution to the network while you were member enjoying all benefits that such a membership brought to you.

Andrea Portas

Translation of the written recollection made in Cagliari in 1994.

Plexus: Some Remarks.

Gaetano Brundu was the first in February 1987 to talk to me about Plexus; he was organizing with some artists an art show inside a house in the district of Castello in Cagliari.

The theme was Bring your Serpent and also I was invited to carry my serpent. I started in this way to be concerned with the logic of Plexus and of its revolutionary theories on the world of contemporary art.

Some months after Plexus organized (Gavoi, Nuoro, July 1987) a big international happening in Sardinia, this was a good opportunity to undertake a series of contacts with the artworld and to change air from the routine of the artistic scenery of the island.

The event got a good success of critic and interest and it was thought that it could become the beginning of a permanent and lasting relationship among the artists in the first person of a group which might grow gradually in progress with the time, a kind of movement of ideas.

During these years the dates of Plexus were several, we went through Carloforte, Cagliari, Dakar, Roma, New York, and again Cagliari; various the covered routes by the ship of the slaves of art, also in ideas and in artistic ways.

Plexus: Motivations.

I worked in these years to bring forward the idea of an art free from ties with the market, that it is concerned mainly to re-sew the tugs with the social tissue with which I shared Plexus goals, if often also I disagreed on some attitudes.

It is necessary to understand that inside a group not all positions are accepted by all individuals, to which is left the faculty to refrain from operating in particular circumstances but in which anyway it must prevail the aggregate will, more than the breaking up, and the pushes of the sharing of ideas and routes must be firm and firmly repeatable.

Plexus: The Problem of Confusion.

The lack of landmarks and roles, the arrogance of some kind attitudes that made the slowdown of the number of the engine turns of Plexus, creating confusion and a kind of vain and presumptuous improvisation incapable to get

concrete itself in something more mature. I do not want to say that all should be through away, on the contrary I say that it is arrived the moment to save what good has been done and way not to give value to it; it is arrived the moment to rebuild the operative nucleus which really acts in the interest of all, that takes the change of the organization and of the care of the movement+s activities, keeping in contact the artists and informing them of the choices and of the ongoing operative proposals.

Plexus: Out of the Gallery.

I have already mentioned to the relationship of open conflict that Plexus has brought forward against the selling system of the artworks (Art System). Plexus has often denied the dialogue with the artmarket in the attempt to find different strategies from those of the multinational art societies that mainly operate their choices on the basis of financial needs, secure like they are that the economic factor and of profit is of main importance in the world of visual arts too. To break these schemes the contemporary artist feels the need to look for an alternative audience different from that which usually attends the centers of power and of art consumption like public and private galleries, even if this may imply and implies the growing of economic problems and of maintenance for the artist himself. This way of acting which from some years is followed by different international artists, it is known as -Out of the Gallery+ movement and it consists in the coherent choice to show the work of art in places not exactly in accordance with their fruition.

Out of the Gallery, far away from the centers of power, art may return to speak of themes of social interest and of popular involvement, it can start to breathe pure air, to live of its own light.

Plexus: Strategies for an Upcoming Future.

The retrieval of these issues, without that these are resolved through cunning operations of apparent breakdown, the reopening of the borders of the group, the loyalty of purposes and the unity in the choices, are very important for the future of Plexus. Many times the decisions are made by few and this had made the detachment of many artists, who felt excluded and kept out. It will be important afterwards to re-sew the tugs made by too many interferences and intrusions by few who created confusion and little professionally, and above all the coherence of choices and purposes; it is necessary to arrive to the point in which the organization and the improvisation touch each other and they complete themselves in each other.

Plexus: Time+Art.

...One apple is less than two, but one is better than nothing. Why through it away?

In November 1992 a strange parcel of yellow ochre colour was delivered to me, the sender was an artist of New York Rolando Politi. I met Rolando here in Cagliari in October during the conference "The Well Being in the XXI Century."

The parcel contained a letter in which Rolando proposed to me an open collaboration, regarding some points of current interest in the New York area: Homeless Society, Recycling Art, Culture Jamming, Sex Line, etc., and various information about the life in the metropolis. For it he sent me a series of significant fliers and posters pulled out from NYC walls, inviting me to join the operation "Dont Dump Drains to River," it was required the creation of a stamp with this call to not pollute and the image of a fish splashing in a river. Everything had to be printed next to the sewers on the streets of his city. It was a clear operation of Sidewalk-Art and I was already engaged with similar things, therefore I accepted well this invitation to a collaboration so interesting and precise.

In the same period Gaetano Brundu who undertook the weight of Plexus International Storage asked me if I could think to do an installation for the

month of December 1992 or January 1993. I accepted also this invitation with enthusiasm and I got the idea that the two demands were somehow in relation each other.

I started to work to the two projects, gathering a good number of information and I arrived to the conclusion that there were the condition to create a network of information for all artists in the first person, a small network, an art subnetwork of Plexus, "Time+Art," ... time of art, time for art, time to art, time+art.

It was in act the first project of collaboration between artists of Cagliari and New York, the first Art+Walk of Time+Art; the big mother was Plexus and it was December 3, 1992.

Plexus: Why Time+Art

I already told which are the real problems of Plexus today: the poor collaboration among components; the absolute incapacity to manage consistently the organization of events; the lack of programming also among individuals; the sufficiency of relations and contacts, etc.

It is necessary a check up, we need to reorder ideas; to make a control: is perhaps sick Plexus? Does it not feel well? What is happening? But just now?

No! Plexus is not ill or anyway it is not a serious patient, it needs only a mouthful of air. It is possible to say that there was originated a kind of elite which is obstructing a firm program or strategy, and it is joined in certain cases with very powerful institutional centers, arriving to pollute the coherence and adhesion of some projects with the social tissue, legitimating justifications, after not related determinate choices, clearly without consistence.

Therefore it was proposed by few but firm artists to pursue with strength the logic of the group, in place and in time, to collaborate actively, to propose ideas and projects, to articulate it in different lines of research, production centers, to promote artistic events, to work to involve other figures etc., to show to exist as group.

Plexus: Time+Art...What is...

Time+Art born as a network of art, finalized more than to the simple production of works of Mail-Art, of which anyway already has a large collection in its center of Cagliari and New York, to support a link among artists of different countries, with the purpose to create collaborations with exhibition or research goals.

Today Time+Art is established as a not profit cultural organization - Visual Arts Project - and it has expanded the range of its competencies. It was able to define better its contacts with foreign countries and has available a large exposition space to organize alternative shows or debates and conferences on art.

Time+Art has the purpose to become a point of reference for the development of visual arts in Sardinia, through the organization and management of shows for students of art schools, of young artists, group shows, happenings, performances, and other art events in Sardinia and abroad.

Jose Rodriguez

Transcript from the first round table "Cultural Navigation and the Community: The Lower East Side," of the NYU Summer Institute of Living Traditions in Art, conducted by the Hon. Dennis DeLeon, Commissioner of Human Rights of the City of New York, Barney Building Summer 1993.

DeLeon: Jose, have you ever tried to bridge, you've been involved in artistic frame work in the Lower East Side some time now. Have you ever tried to make a bridge that gentleman was talking about?

Rodriguez: Sometimes I call it 'discovery of fear'. You're right to fear the others, the others different from you. So many times it's surprising when you see an old Jewish lady and you wish to help her to cross the street but it is not possible because the idea that she has, called fear, "Oh, no these people are rub you".

The same level we have too from Latino to Black people, to understand that because we use the word white, "They're white" by saying that, we're separating them out. Sure people have strange idea, but it's what we called here the fear we always spoke about it. The fear is constancy. What we try to do in CUANDO and with PLEXUS is to fight racism and we are very active. People don't like to talk about it, people don't like to mention, but it's reality. And reality is that in this city we're fighting constantly against fear, we're trying in our community to establish a way in which all these diversities can find a way to talk, to communicate to be together. We are against that fear. I work in Brooklyn. I'm working in a child and family administration. I have to win that. We're fighting that fear which is our main problem. We're with fear in our community, we try to fight, sometimes we're able to accomplish something sometimes we can't, but that's a part of what it's all about.

DeLeon: Tell us about PLEXUS.

Rodriguez: PLEXUS started ten years ago, from a cosmopolitan confront by seeing this diversity of cultures. PLEXUS has a goal something called "cultural navigation" and what is trying to do in all these ten years is to make a bridge between those different cultures and also make to see the artist as a person of the community and not to see the artist production within his cultural context. The Artists in the first person are the main concern. Plexus also try to points out that the living tradition is what defines community. Art defines the community and the artist defines his community and the community defines art and this has been PLEXUS's reason to build in Lower East Side the collaboration with CUANDO. The collaboration started in 1985 and it began to develop an international house of cultures of CUANDO where different cultures come together and try to understand each other.

An other level is what has been call experimental and avant-garde. The Avant-Garde understanding was that the artist is a social class in the community. What defines community and what defines the artists is the work within their community. We don't want to be an institution like Metropolitan Museum , MOMA, I call that Art: Pension Art. We can see it. We are talking about art in the living scene, the permanent scene. That is a concept that is reality, PLEXUS art is living scene, a community living scene; a community culture is a community living scene, what you get in museum and galleries is dead body.

DeLeon: Well preserved.

Rodriguez: Yes, well preserved. I'm talking about that neither CUANDO neither PLEXUS neither Miguel we don't need a resting place for dead body.

We're interesting in living art and living art is living community. That's what happens, you're in this summer institute, you're coming to our community to see what we do. Don't come to see dead body. Come to see and research us as living body, people, art, painting, singing, feeling, experimenting, that's an invitation that we're making to you. Come and see us, as a living Art  
If you go to see Metropolitan, Lincoln Center, you pay your money there. That's dead. If you want to see alive, come to us.

Paper "The Voyage of the Elisabeth: Cultural Navigation and Community, Art, Reconciliation, and Well Being," presented at the fourth roundtable of NYU Summer Institute of Living Traditions, October 1993, New York.

Cultural Navigation: Plexus International was created or funded by a Group of individuals, all of them coming from an cosmopolitan cultural experience living at that moment in the City of New York and were been confronted with the reality of dealing or relating to a multiplicity of cultures or realities, which simultaneously were assessing the world in terms of what that world and their culture meant to the other worlds and their cultural realities.

Been confronted with these other cultures assess their European culture with a sort of accusatory discourse they set up to develop a bridge among cultures. This "bridge" couldn't be base on the perception of a dominant culture, this bridge has to evolve from a perspective of "fraternal" encounter and gear towards a creative synthesis: this creative synthesis is to be base on the following premises: the Artist in the First person and the possibility of developing a cultural synthesis.

The Artist in the FIRST PERSON is a concept evolving from the following facts: that the perception of an autonomous art is a fallacy of the rationality of the Modern era.

This "autonomous art" instead of negating the condition of artistic creativity as another commodity in reality is confirming this condition of commodity. As such the artistic production is another artefact named by the dominant structures of power and as such the artistic creation become an object of possession of the dominant power.

As the dominant structures have this power also they determine and define what is to be considered "art."

By such action the dominant structures eliminated two fundamentals elements of the artistic creativity - the artistic production as a reflection of the social praxis and as a "cultural production."

By this power the dominant structures are able to define in terms of "high" and "low" culture, civilize and "savage" culture. And most important this definition is done by limiting who would enjoy and enhance their subjectivity by an act of appropriation of the cultural production of the society. They define society in terms of their dominant privileges and define the self-esteem of the component of Society.

The artist in the first person is the possibility of regaining the power of defining the artistic creation by the Artist and as such by eliminating the

condition of commodity to their creation. And most important the Artist in the First Person is defining his creation as a cultural production.

This ethical action is only possible through a social praxis within the community.

This social praxis of the artist allow the community to start defining. The community won't be defined by an image and delimited by the dominant structures.

This possibility of the community to define itself allows the community to redefine their self-esteem and to determine their own cultural production. Also, this autodefinition will allow the community to regain the possibility of knowledge. Not a knowledge base in the domination of nature and as such a relation base in the domination of one subject to another, but a knowledge base in enhancing the creative subject.

Been the subject a creative entity allows the community to develop a communicative consciousness and overcome their role of slaves of the dominant structures.

By overcoming this relation of master-slave the Artist in the First Person and the community are able to start to participate in their own definition.

This participation allows the community to develop its own language, its own forms of expression, its own forms of playful experience - its own theater!

Not a theater of repetition but one of creation. The community cultural production won't become artifacts of museums, galleries - artefacts of the Pantheon! To be observed and researched, but will become expression of life. The community won't be anymore a death body but an intense experience that would be define as life.

Plexus understands cultural navigation as the only alternative which will allow the cultural production to be an energetic and living creation. As such 'culture' won't be the patrimony of the Pantheon.

The only possible way of defining culture is as a living organism. In this sense, the community and the Artist in the First Person perceive culture and its by-products as creation of the present. The community will be able to define its culture as the process of the becoming, never as Artefacts of the Pantheon but as present that may become the future but never the past.

The Artist in the First Person and its praxis within the community insurance's the possibility of naming and defining the cultural production.

The possibility of reconciliation among individuals and cultures is only possible through a reality base on multiplicity and diversity. The only way in which this diversity may Reconcile is within the bridge of the cultural navigation.

Multiplicity-diversity: pluralism is the only possibility of freedom! Freedom that defines the subject as the Permanent becoming as the possibility of a synthesis of the diversity.

This cultural synthesis is the concretization of the well being for our present and for the possibility of the next Century.

The Well Being is possible as far as the Artist and its community are able to develop and create a new cultural synthesis.

Cultural Synthesis becomes the main enemy/obstacle of the uniqueness-homogeneity of the dominant structures of power - the structures of rationality! Rationality understood as the language of domination. The language which perceives all relations as an Struggle, a discourse that perceives the subject as an object of domination. A domination that has to be understood as the domination by an elitist-self-define superior class that elaborates a discourse of fear - the discourse of ethnical and cultural cleanness; the discourse that defines all relations as relationships of domination, that defines the subject as an object of possess as another commodity.

In its 10 years of existence Plexus has understood his action praxis as a social praxis exercised in the community. As such the living culture is an experience within the confinements of the community - the only place where the artist can become the Artist in the First Person - is in the community were the permanent present - the permanent becoming- happens.

This intensive experience of Plexus has been exercised in two levels:

One of those has been the praxis of art in the best tradition of the Avant-garde creativity. Avant-garde understood as the artist regaining his social praxis and regaining his First Person - the artist been able to define its creativity, been able to name his art. This Avant-garde praxis is a continuation of a tradition which took the responsibility of confronting art as another rational institution of the dominant power structures.

Plexus International has understood their Avant-garde praxis as a praxis of the form of the autonomous-logocentric art. But as a praxis that liberates art from its role as an institution as another commodity. The Avant-garde praxis of Plexus has to be accepted as the negation of art as an institution, as the elaboration of the artist context within the community context.

Because of this Avant-garde tradition, the other element of Plexus intensive experience is in the maintenance of the 'living tradition in art.'

This living tradition in art is the one that defines the community as the space of the living culture. Culture becoming the beholder of magic, the beholder of shadows, in the state of permanent becoming.

The living tradition in art is in ultimate sense what defines a community, it is by keeping the oral tradition, the passing from generation to generation the essence of the community, the essence of culture - culture as a living experience.

The living tradition in art is also the act of self-definition of the self-image of a culture of a community.

In terms of the dominant rationality, the maintenance of a living tradition in art prevents the rational conscious industry from defining the community.

Prevent the rational dominant structures of power from developing the discourse of the 'low culture,' of defining culture as a 'death body' as an object of the Pantheon.

It also reminds the Avant-garde tradition that is within then the possibility of defining its own creativity, of challenging art as an institution.

The other expression of Plexus praxis is their conception of the International Community House of Cultures, this been the more permanent project of Plexus.

Plexus has projected itself from its insertion as a network of cultural enclaves. In this sense, the Storage in Cagliari, Sardinia, is one of the 'stone' of the Plexus network; the House of the Slave Art in Goree, Senegal, becomes the other. Then Plexus Amsterdam and Plexus Rome in the European "plateau," and finally the network is amplified with the International Community House of All Cultures in New York, a project that Plexus has been working in association with CUANDO Civic and Cultural Center since 1985.

The Plexus network becomes the structure that insurance possibility of the Well Being.

The Well Being becomes the finality or by-product of the concept of Reconciliation.

Plexus understands that the goal of Reconciliation of the cultures is concretized within the living experience of a new cultural synthesis.

To understand the experience of Reconciliation is to understand that the only way that Reconciliation becomes a concrete reality is through the historical experiment of a new cultural synthesis.

The new cultural synthesis becomes the living culture as a permanent present as the eternal becoming of a cultural production: the synthesis of cultures: European, African, American, Indian, etc., into a synthesis or pluralism of cultures, by which the individual becomes the living subjects, the permanent becoming in freedom.

Transcript of the interview made in New York, in November 1994.

From the Portorican cultural tradition from which I come from, I was educated that the artists are the first voices speaking on behalf of the community, and that the artists are not separated from the community in which they belong.

The artists are significant components of their society.

The different communities and artists, involved in the history of Plexus, were both interactive significant components of the Plexus development.

In a historical grounding of Plexus, there are certain elements which have to be established to understand how Plexus Black Box became a metaphor of the cultural growing of Plexus as a community-based art organization.

In the Plexus historical growing it is possible to identify different phases of development.

The first phase started in the end of 1981, in New York, when Sandro Dernini, Giancarlo Schiaffini and other Italian artists, thought to create a loose organization with the idea to open a space in which the artists "in the first person" could be the coproducers of their own art activities.

This original idea took shape in 1982, in a performance space in the Chelsea area of New York, named Plexus, dedicated to the interaction of the different art forms of expression, without any necessary involvement of the community, on the traditional model art for the sake of art.

The second phase began in 1984 when Plexus, lost his performance space, and moved in the Lower East Side of New York, at the Shuttle Theater.

In the Lower East Side it was a radical cultural and social tradition through which Plexus began its second phase.

This second stage could be named the Plexus art-opera phase as a collective art form of expression to perform collectively their egocentric ideas. It was still part of the autonomous concept of art but started to get involved with people from the community like Sarah Farley, a local leader of an homesteaders community, Miguel Pinero and Miguel Algarin, originators of the Nuyoricans Poets Caf  and Williams Parker, leader of Sound Unity a large community jazz collective. They were groups with a different history and expressing the alienation of their community in their own languages and defending their presence in the struggle of the Lower East Side under an heavy cultural and real estate gentrification pressure. This encounter started to change the entire personality of Plexus by understanding that art was not only about their individual art expression but to integrate their art forms into the community life in which they were placed.

This move Plexus to grow in a third phase which it was called "co-operas" in which, in 1987-1988, the artists started to think also in collective art forms. Plexus was forced to start to develop what the historical art avantgarde left to be developed in the direction of the relation between power and community. This development brings to this last recent phase of Plexus, started in 1989 to the present, which it is called the reconciliation stage, in which Plexus got involved in politics with academic institutions.

In this context, the concept of Plexus Black Box grew as an educational community-based art project, in a broader cultural sense, creating channels of communication among different communities involved in Plexus activities to express their art experiences in connecting themselves with other cultural diversities and to educate the young generations in this multicultural diversity to understand what is art within and out their own culture, and to accept that the world, the society and any community is made by a diversity of many kind groups or cultural experiences. It will help to define themselves.

The role of Plexus Black Box is to expose, to integrate all aspects of the society, art is one of these as well as science and technology. The concept of Plexus Black Box is a growing concept of a scientific system build in an institutional academic setting which is integrating artistic and cultural experiences in the community met during its growing.

The knowledge of one is integrated into the knowledge of other one. Plexus Black Box has its roots in the historical art avantgardes, in the surrealist ideas of Antonin Artoud, and in the concept of a responsibility of the artists as intellectuals in the transformation of the society by Antonio Gramsci.

Barnaby Ruhe

Paper "PLEXUS", published in the Plexus Passport, 1992, New York.

PLEXUS is the shaman journey along the lines of Van Gennep's Rites of Passage's format.

That is, the Plexus art opera is an evolving art action that engages in three distinct phases: the first phases the identification and dialogue with the Norm or status quo, embracing the system of art logic even as the embrace is deadly. The second phase is the "dematerialization" of our constellation of concepts surrounding art activity; this phase is what Victor Turner calls the 'liminal'

phase where roles reverse, definitions are tossed back into the air, confusion reigns around blazing ambiguities functioning like a Roschartz blot, and artists dive in with no clear functions delineated.

At first the second phase seems like just so much nonsense, like acts of desperation.

The third phase is the rematerialization around the PLEXUS metaphor. Like a pearl formed around an irritating grain of sand, PLEXUS sets up a metaphor that engages art activity without precise directives. You have to be there: Artists congregate because of a sensed 'communitas' and mill about when the directives are clearly unclear. At some undetermined moment, the mob coheres into congruity.

Art shapes itself around a symbol. Plexus takes a shape that is of the moment, yet reflective of the undercurrents of the 'zeitgeist' of the age.

This is possible because the second phase functions as an ink blot, allowing within the ambiguity the surfacing of associations from the (collective/community) unconscious.

The shamanic journey invariably engages a 'trance' phase that integrates 'reality' with the experiences surfacing at the second phase.

Groups engaging a common mind or mood have been documented.

Finding that common esprit is not the reaction to orders from a leader, but discovered from within.

Hence the urgency of the metaphor as the activating ingredient in the Plexus art opera. Its very ambiguity serves to entrance the participants during the second phase of the ritual journey.

The metaphor is by necessity ambiguous, that is capable of multiple meanings. The dramatic metaphor collects the collective sentiment of the group whose minds are open ended.

Frank Shifreen

Paper "Modern Art & Commodity Exchange," published in Plexus Newsletter 1988, New York, by Plexus International Art Urban Forum, Inc.

Art's separation from the process of material production has enabled it to demystify the reality reproduced in this process. Art challenges the monopoly of the established reality to determine what is "real," and it does so by creating a fictitious world which is nevertheless more "real than reality itself. (Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension*.)

Art has a dual nature in our society. It is both an exchange of ideas, of revelations about which lives within the confines of our economic system the way any other manufactured product does.

Many will agree that the current state of American art criticism is poor. There is a hidden agenda in that key secret relationships exist between critics, commercial galleries, and museums. Some critics not only get paid by the magazines they work for and the dealers whose shows they review, but also

get commissions from works they sell privately. Even without this blatant monetary compensation, the system as it stands is incestuous, encouraging favoritism and toadyism, making it extremely hard for the majority of artists to emerge through the traditional magazine/gallery/museum critical network. We all know many good artists who do not show or sell, and I will stress that there are many honest critics who are also prisoners of the system, receiving only a pittance for their efforts.

Given this situation, we have begun to focus on each other and the alternative art society that we have created. We include such organizations as: Colab, Group Material, Plexus, or O.I.A., and alternative spaces such as ABC No Rio, Fashion Moda, Alternative Museum, and the Knitting Factory.

Many of the younger East Side galleries have also been created to fulfill the need for artists to show their work and for the public to see it. It has become necessary for us to bypass the system which seems to have a severe case of hardening of the arteries. We should celebrate the enormously vital younger artist and enter into dialogue with all.

In the postmodernist theory known as critical regionalism, theorists respond to the need for the development of local autonomy. This encourages the growth of many styles and schools, it abolishes cultural imperialism, and it allows for local answers to local problems. Within the Theory of Evolution it is said that development and progress result from mutation in protected, isolated pockets. These mutations eventually find their niches in spite of the pressures of competition and natural selection.

This is my metaphor for disenfranchised artists. "Natural selection" is the free economy. After they are nurtured, these radical developments can emerge fully formed, ready to compete with the quotidian.

The difficulties of being an artist in our society are incredible. There is a great need for support networks between artists. There is also a need for criticism not tied to the old system. We hope to ease the burden of the perennial artist's dilemma. This magazine is for artists and by artists, and we will serve our community by the freest exchange of ideas and information.

Paper "Open Call," by Frank Shifreen, Lorenzo Pace, Larry Stanley, Hope Carr, Joi Huckaby, published in Plexus Newsletter 1988, New York, by Plexus International Art Urban Forum, Inc.

We resent the use of slave images in any literature, promotional material or propaganda when the use of such images results in the trivialization or simplification of the real African slave experience. More often than not, the Plexus literature, posters, flyers and invitation (a considerable amount) use images of slaves in bondage or in transit as cargo.

It is offensive to trivialize history for the sake of artistic argument. Slavery and images of slavery are not merely metaphors. Slavery is the real experience of many hundreds of thousands of people. One cannot use a historical or current event as a vehicle for information without considering certain larger implications and slavery is central to both the American and African experiences.

Certainly, there are similarities between the art market and the slave market, that in a disturbing way art has been reduced to a commodity like slaves: something to be bought and sold. However, there is a difference between comparison and equation.

If Plexus as a movement stands for freedom of art, freedom of interdisciplinary communication, and freedom of the artists in the first person, then these political tenets must be conveyed without demonstrating the all too common patronising air of most radical/liberal movements. Evoking images of slaves without, or at least acknowledging, the impact is objectionable. Before certain metaphors are used in any Plexus propaganda such use should be examined and the producer of such propaganda should first consider the potential social ramifications the use of that image may have.

Youssof Traore

Translation from French by the researcher of the paper presented as opening presentation of Plexus International in Dakar, December 23, 1987.

Gentlemen of the Community, of the Government and of the diplomatic rappresentances.

Dear guests, dear artists, ladies and gentlemen, we thank you to have answer to our call so numerous. We thank you to have left your family duties for this occasion which is built on your ancestral critic and generous disponibility towards all cultural horizons, formal and non formal.

I would like to present an artistic and scientific project, concerning patrical aspects and metaphors; it is the complex aspects of Plexus, conceptual denomination of this project.

Therefore, we will give you briefly his profile. In fact, Plexus is a project of an international structure of communication for artists and scientists interested in the interaction of art and science within the everyday life.

Born in 1982 in New York, Plexus has evolved considerably in the realm of the experimental and intedisciplinary research.

Since 1985, it never stopped to stimulate the mutual process of artistic and scientific cooperation. Cooperation realized by the critic dialogue without barriers with the use of the technology.

Next to these practical aspects, Plexus has other dimensions more or less complex, place for reflection, and for information. It is the place of the metaphor of the Serpent, understood as a multilateral mean of accelerated communication.

This is the brief presentation of Plexus International. Dear audience, thank you to have kindly follow me. I did not ignore that the kindness is in the absolute tradition of Senegal.

