

In the beginning of 1984, from 14 to 19 February, through Rodrigo Solomon, it was staged *Leap of Faith*, an epic theatre program directed by Willem Brugman, featuring: Nila Greco, Pooh Kaye, Max Blagg, Sylvie Pomaret.



Willem Brugman 2003 Australia

It was the last show performed at the Plexus Space, because, without any notice in advance, Brambilla and Longo forced Sandro Dernini to stop Plexus activities and to leave the space.

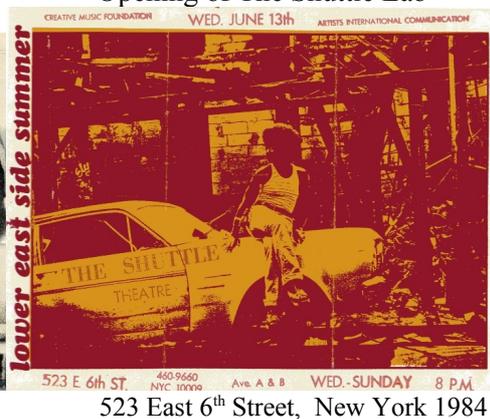
On March 1, Plexus performance space closed and Sandro Dernini, who was also living inside the gallery area, moved out. He was full of debts, with no money and no house. Moving from one friend place to an other one, during this period he met Brian Goodfellow, a painter as well as a model, who introduced him to Mrs. Sarah Farley, a charismatic leader of the homesteader community organization L.A.N.D. ((Local Action for Neighborhood Development) of the Lower East Side and an old friend of Billie Holliday. She was running a thrift shop on the ground floor of a burned building, at 523 East 6th Street, between Avenue A and B, in the Lower East Side.

#### Lower East Side Community



Rev.....and...Sarah Farley, Rolando Politi,

#### Opening of The Shuttle Lab



Mrs. Farley allowed to Sandro Dernini to move in the building and to live on the third floor, with no glasses in the windows and only a portion of the floor and of the ceiling. There was no water and no electricity. It was very cold and very hard for him to live there, but he had no other chances. Giuseppe Sacchi, a journalist friend helped him to survive and then together they decided to make in the ruined basement of the building, totally full of garbage, a new community multi forms art space: The Shuttle Theatre. In the Lower East Side in that time there was a a really incredible gathering of artists from all over, together with a strong local community which was not present in the past Sandro's Chelsea experience with Plexus performance space.

In the Lower East Side Sandro discovered what meant to be in the community of the Lower East Side . He was lucky to have, as a big mama, Ms. Sarah Farley. She was a real 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 fights 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. Through her, Sandro discovered the cultural identity of the Lower East Side Community and he became deeply connected with it culturally, understanding at the same time his Sardinian roots and what meant to defend own traditions. Lower East Side was not just a place for old or new immigrants. It was a very rich, may be the richest, place culturally in New York. Many community artists came and played in the basement of the Shuttle Theatre.

#### Survival Resistance



Julius Klein, New York 2005

Sandro Dernini, New York 1984, photo by L. Kanter

On June 13, The Shuttle Theatre was opened by Sandro Dernini and Giuseppe Sacchi, in partnership with Brian Goodfellow and Karl Berger, a musician director of the Creative Music Foundation in Woodstock, associated to the Zen Arts Center of United States. Willoughby Sharp acted as the artistic director.

#### Downtown Art Scene



Willoughby Sharp and Butch Morris New York 1997



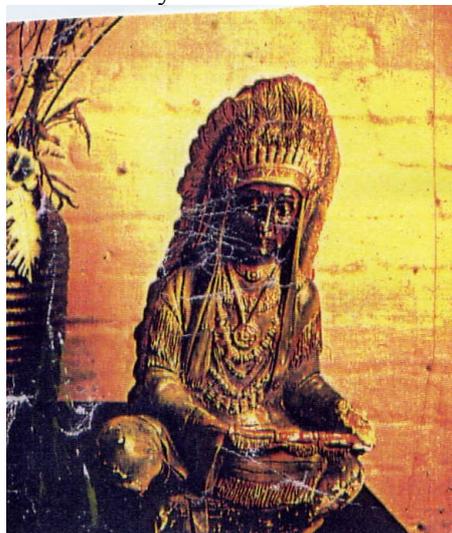
Jemeel Moondoc, Fred Floyd, New York 1997

One dollar was charged at the door by Nolan to get in. Since the first day it became very tough to get in The Shuttle, because, they didn't want to have in front the burned building too many limousines standing outside on the street, creating troubles with the Fire Department. Shortly it was really there inside an unique art audience, made mainly by same artists who were playing there. Julius Klein was the bartender and Sandro Dernini helped him sometimes.

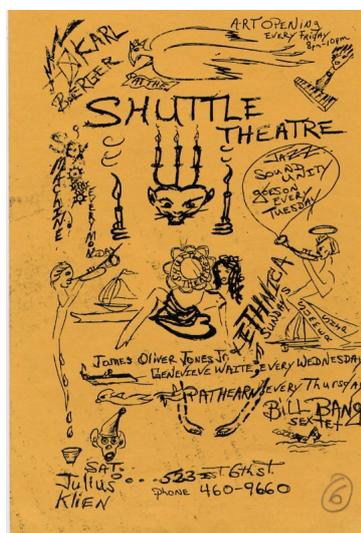
The Shuttle opened with the group art exhibition *Girls Night Out* curated by Carlo Mc Cormick, at the time art critic of Art Forum, featuring: Keiko Bonk, Jane Bowman, Nancy Brooks Brody, Patrice Caire, Andrea Evans, Manuela Filliaci, Barbara Gary, Jasmin Harwood-Ramirez, Pat Hearn, Annie Herron, Babette Holland, Rebecca Howland, Tessa Hughes-Freeland, Ruth Kligman, Anita Lane, Karen Luna, Gracie Mansion, Lisa McDonald, Mette Medson, Marylyn Minten, Judy Rifka, Hope Sandrow, Caren Scarpulla, Nina Seligman, Jo Shane, Kiki Smith, Stacie Teele, Christine Zounek, Rhonda Zwillinger. After it, Steve Kaplan, as curator, presented two one man shows, dedicated to Bernd Naber and Peter Grass.

Few days after, Mikey Pinero, a poet very well known in the Lower East Side community, gave to Sandro an Indian American statuette which was the house protector of the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, a Lower East Side community space founded by Pinero with Miguel Algarin, which at that time was closed. This statuette was placed at the entrance of The Shuttle and its image became the logo of membership card of The Shuttle.

Nuyorican Poets Café's Protector      The Shuttle Theatre



Statuette from Mickey Pinero



523 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Lower East Side, New York

The Shuttle activities started with a weekly cabaret program, music and art performances, featuring Genevieve Waite with Robert Arron, Tony Love, Tigressa, Julius Klein, Ralston Farina, Trevor Stuart, Gary Goldberg, Arleen Schloss, Billy Bang, Jemeel Moondoc, Rashid Al-Akbar, Petra Plecko, Rrata Christin Jones, the Gamala Taki Band with Karl Berger, Babatunde Olatunji and Alfa Diallo.



Miguel Algarin

Alfa Diallo

Giuseppe Sacchi and Arleen Schloss

Through a very close collaboration with the bass player William Parker, the collective *Sound Unity* presented an intense community-based music program, featuring: Dennis Charles, Peter Kowald, Charles Gayle, Rashied Ali, William Parker, Roy Campbell, Daniel Carter, Rashied Bakr, Karen Borca, Jackson Krall, Ellen Christi, Alex Lodico, Patsy Parker, John Hagen, Dicky Dworkin, Dave Hofstra. *The Art World is a Jungle*, featured in a crazy hour 60 performances of 60 seconds each, directly staged by all performers as producers of this happening. Miguel Algarin curated a weekly poetry reading program *Long Shot*, presented by Nuyorican Poets Cafe, featuring Allen Ginsberg, Mickey Pintero, Amiri Baraka, Pedro Pietri, Quincy Troupe, Robert Press, Bernadette Mayer, Andy Clausen, Miguel Algarin, and others poets.

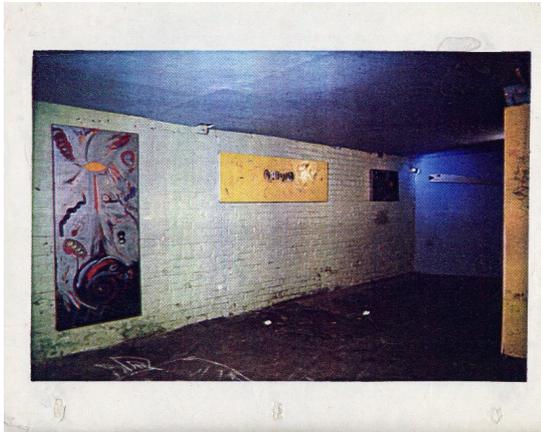


The Shuttle, New York 1984

The need of an art program managed directly by the artist, with no curators as mediators came up within the community of the Lower East Side direct involvement into the program of The Shuttle, therefore Sandro Dernini recovered the name and the concept of

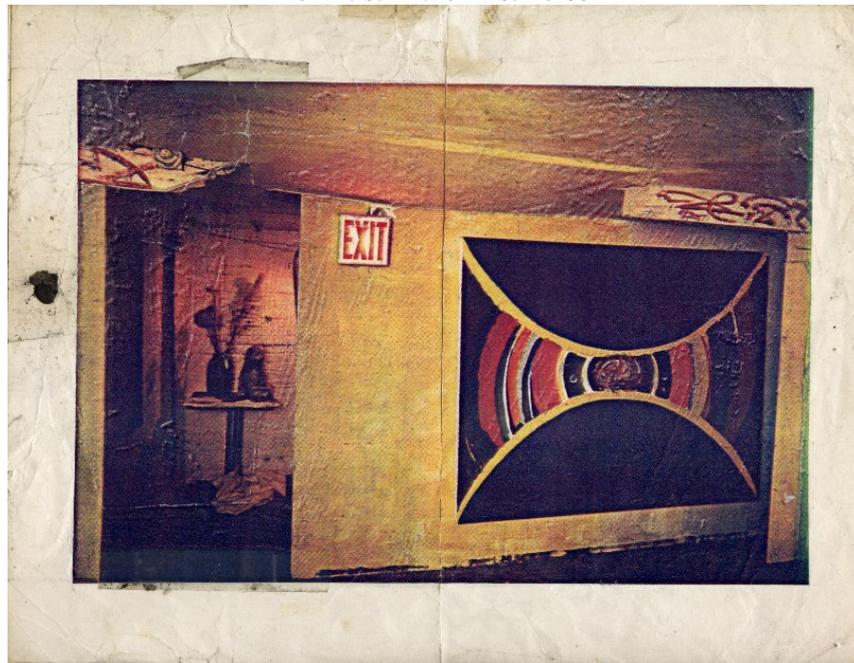
his old NYU program *The Artist in the First Person* to start a new art project, made by artists as curators as well as producers of it. The first presented artist was Joan Waltermath, followed by Arleen Schloss, Mickey Pinero, Ralston Farina, and Julius Kein.

The Artist in the First Person



Paintings by Joan Waltermath, 523 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Lower East Side, New York 1984

The Artist in the First Person



Paintings by Joan Waltermath, 523 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Lower East Side, New York 1984



THE ARTIST IN THE FIRST PERSON

THE LETTERWOMAN  
SHOW  
ARLEEN SCHLOSS

FRIDAY  
SHUTTLE THEATRE

523 E 6<sup>TH</sup> ST. AUGUST -10 8-10PM

Performance by Arleen Schloss, The Shuttle Theatre, New York 1984

On August 25, on the occasion of a community cultural event to stop the gentrification of the Lower East Side performed in the middle of the street, in front The Shuttle Theatre, William Parker performed *In Order to Survive*, a statement addressed to all artists.

*IN ORDER TO SURVIVE: A STATEMENT* by William Parker, 1984

*"We cannot separate the starving child from the starving musician, both things are caused by the same thing capitalism, racism and the putting of military spending ahead of human rights. The situation of the artist is a reflection of America's whole attitude towards life and creativity." There was a period during the 1960's in which John Coltrane, Malcolm X, Duke Ellington, Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, Bill Dixon, Sun Ra, Martin Luther King and Albert Ayler were all alive and active. Avant garde jazz contemporary improvised music coming out of the Afro-American was at a peak of creativity and motion. Avant garde jazz contemporary improvised music coming out of the Afro-American was at a peak of creativity and motion. ABC Impulse was recording Coltrane and Archie Shepp, ESP Disk was recording the music of Albert Ayler, Sunny Murray, Sonny Simmons, Giuseppi Logan, Noah Howard, Frank Wright, Marion Brown, Henry Grimes, Alan Silva and many other exponents of the music. Blue Note and Prestige Records were recording Andrew Hill, Eric Dolphy, Sam Rivers, Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry among others. Radio stations such as WLIB now called BLS and WRVR which now plays pop music were both playing jazz 24 hours a day including some of the new music of Coltrane, Shepp, Ayler, and Ornette Coleman. There was energy in the air as people marched and protested in the north and south demanding human rights, demanding that the senseless killing in Vietnam stop. Simultaneously, like musicians before them the avant garde became aware of the necessity to break away from tradition business practices. Like musicians lives being in the hand of producers and nightclubs owners who only wish to make money and exploit the musician. The musicians began to produce their own concerts and put out their own records in order to gain more control over their lives. The Jazz Composers' Guild formed by Bill Dixon was one of the first musicians' organization in the 60's to deal with the self determination of the artist.*

In Order to Survive



523 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Lower East Side, New York 1984, photo by M. Wheler

*Other efforts had been made by Charles Mingus, Sun Ra as they both had produced their own concerts and records in the 50's. To follow was the A.A.C.M. (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians) formed about a year after the Jazz Composers' Guild, and Milford Graves, Don Pullen, record company SRP (Self Reliance Program). Musicians got together with poets to put out a magazine called the Crickett, all the articles were written by poets and musicians themselves. It was edited by Imanu Baraka, Larry Neal, A.B. Spellman, advisors on the magazine were Milford Graves, Cecil Taylor and Sun Ra. Contributors included Roger Riggins, Stanley Crouch, Albert Ayler, and Ishmael Reed. The motto was "black Music in Evolution."*

*Just as the music and the movement began to break ground establishing itself, several things happened: Malcolm X was assassinated, Martin Luther King was assassinated, John Coltrane died, British rock and roll began to change the music industry. Not only could record be sold they could sell posters, books, wigs, dolls, and thousands of electric guitars to the youth of America. They promoted and pushed rock music as the real thing yet when these rock stars were interviewed they would say always cite jazz or blues as the origin of rock. Also at this time there was a sudden increase in the availability of drugs in the black community. Every apparent gain as a result of the civil rights movement was not given up without fight. All gains were achieved because America had a gun to its head. To question, to speak of change was never willingly allowed the 60's movement was so strong that it couldn't be denied. They could silence a few poets but they couldn't silence an entire nation. The 1970's was a period of tranquilization. There was no mass movement to continue the motion set forth by the 60's, it was a ten year period of systematically silencing and discouraging the truth. Poets were made to feel like criminals; people were going back in time because it seemed easier than going forward. Record companies began only to record safe music, musicians began to water down their music. The C.I.A. and F.B.I. had files on the music they knew who was going along with the program, those who bought cars and played electric music and those whose politics were considered a threat to the existing inertia. The neglect of the poor, the neglect of the arts is no accident, this country is sustained by killing off all that is beautiful, that deals with reality. They will go to any lengths to hold back the truth, to prevent the individual from hearing and seeing his or her own vision of life. Some people are controlled by neglect while other are controlled by making them stars.*

#### In Order to Survive



William Parker with the Don Cherry's Buddha, S.Anna Arresi (Sardinia) 2004

*As the 80's arrived this fire music that talked about revolution and healing had almost vanished only a few musicians continue to play and develop it. The sleepiness of the 70's gave birth to a new electronic age of computers and video machines. Where ever human energy could be saved it was popular music lost what little identity it had. In listening to today's pop music it's hard to tell whether the group is male or female, black or white, synthersizers have replaced living musicians. We have all been desensitized people walk around in dazes sitting back while these blood thirsty gangsters have free reign of the country and of the people's lives. Our food source, our housing source are owned and operated by power hungry people who do not have our best interest in mind, they only wish to make a profit. All of this is not new knowledge, it has been said many times before, the message must be constantly repeated, intellectual knowledge of the problems is not enough, we must feel the blade piercing the hearts of all that are oppressed, jailed, starved and murdered by these criminals who call themselves leaders who act in the name of peace and democracy. Since we have little we must band together pulling all our little resources to form a base in which to work. We must learn from all the mistakes of the past dropping any selfish notions in order for this movement to succeed, in order for it to take root and begin to grow.*

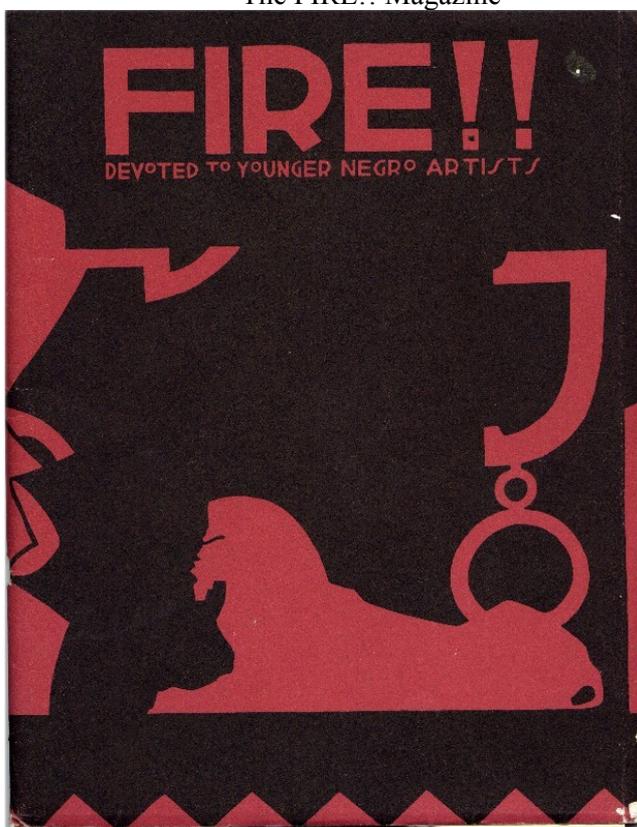
*We must ask the questions why am I an artist? Why do I play music? What is the ultimate goal? Am I playing with the same spirit that I played with 10 years ago or have I just become more*

*technically proficient? The idea is to cultivate an audience by performing as much as possible on a continuous basis, not waiting to be offered work rather creating work. Uniting with all those who hear. Those who are willing to go all the way. We must put pressure on those with power to give some of it up (picketing, boycotts, petitions, what ever it takes) and finally we must define ourselves and not be defined by others.*

*We must take control of our lives, building a solid foundation for the future.*

*In Order to Survive* as a community event was organized by Sound Unity, Plexus, Nuyorican Poets Cafe, L.A.N.D., The Shuttle Theatre and other community organizations. It was an open call to draw attention to the condition of the starving status of the artist as well as of the child in the community. Miguel Algarin, Billy Bang, William Parker, Alfa Diallo, Karl Berger, Jeemeel Moondoc, Roy Campbell, David Street, Arleen Schloss, performed on the street while Bruce Richard Nugent together with Ms. Farley chaired the community event, with Bruce Richard Nugent who was the last artist in life from *FIRE !!*, the historical black renaissance magazine published in Harlem in 1926.

The FIRE!! Magazine



Harlem, New York 1926

Few days after this community event, Don Cherry, a well known world musician, who was performing at the Shuttle Theatre with Mickey Pinero, gave to Sandro Dernini a little metal statuette of a Buddha that he brought from Tibet as his contribution for the development of a fund-raising community event in support to the call *In Order to Survive*.

The following day, very early on the morning, Sandro Dernini was awakened up by an old friend of his father from Sardinia, Prof. Raimondo Demuro, just arrived from the island of Sardinia, a region of Italy at the centre of the Western Mediterranean sea and Sandro's native country. He spoke only in Italian and in Sardinian language and it was mysterious how he got up by himself to knock Sandro's door, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of a burned building, very dangerous in the Lower East Side.

Prof. Raimondo De Muro

Nuraghic warrior and nuraghic tower



Cagliari, Sardinia 1990



Sardinia 1800-1200 B.C.

De Muro talked in a very emotionally way to Sandro how the identity of his native culture, named “*Nuraghic*”, survived through the time since when during the bronze age, around 1600-300 B.C., it was built all over the island a system of 17.000 stone towers, *nuraghes*, about which very little it was known around the world. He showed some ancient images of bronze statuettes of nuraghic warriors, with four arms, four eyes and two antennas and he spoke about some oral tales reporting how his Nuraghic ancestors were able to travel in a “dematerialised” way, from one place to another one, through collective rites.

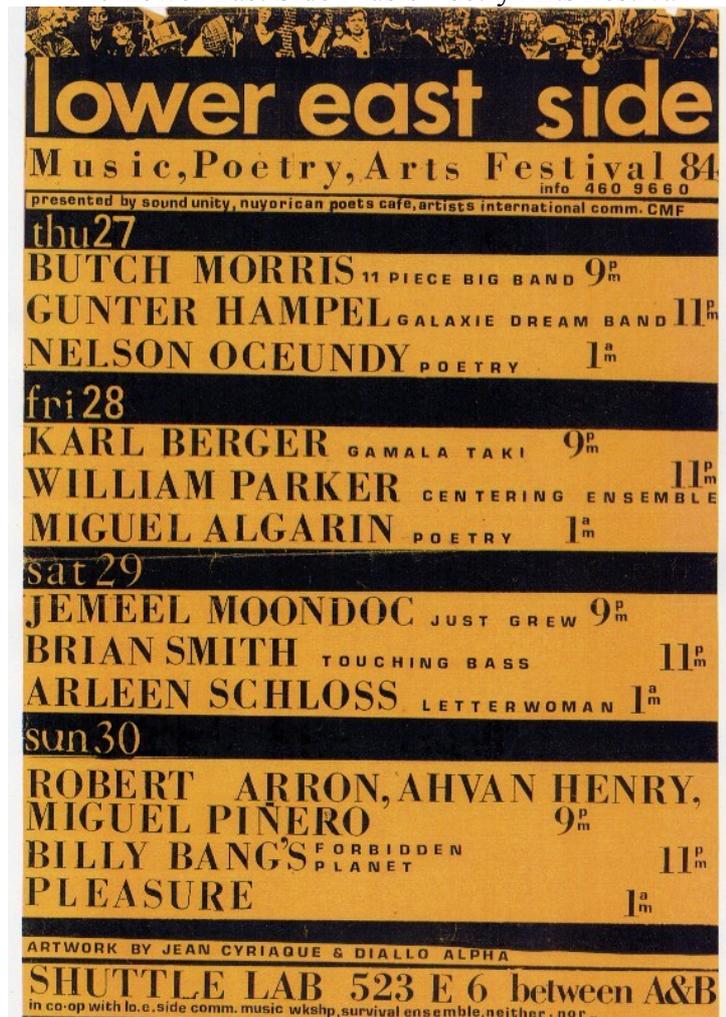
Prof. De Muro asked Sandro to help him to find a publisher for his book *The Tales of Nuraghilology (I Racconti della Nuraghelologia)*, related to these ancient oral tales from the old “nuraghic” culture of Sardinia. Stephen Di Lauro, a playwright who was performing at The Shuttle wrote an introduction for his book, renamed *The Towers of Power*, and tried also to find the publisher for it, but with no success.



Stephen Di Lauro, New York 1993

In the beginning of September, Jeemeel Moondoc, Billy Bang, William Parker and Sandro Dernini established the Lower East Side Music Committee. They organized at the Shuttle *The Lower East Side Music Poetry Arts Festival '84*, presented by Sound Unity and Nuyorican Poets Café., featuring Butch Morris, Gunter Hampel, Nelson Oeundy, Karl Berger, William Parker, Miguel Algarin, Jemeel Moondoc, Brian Smith, Arleen Schloss, Robert Aaron, Ahvan Henry, Miguel Pinero, Billy Bang, Pleasure. An art show by Alfa Diallo and Jean Cyriaqueque was installed around The Shuttle. After, it was presented *Voice of Ammerica*, a cabaret program featuring: *Uncle Sam* by Dave Street; *Taxi Cabaret* by Rockets Redglare; *The Poet Himself* by Marty Watt.

The Lower East Side Music Poetry Arts Festival

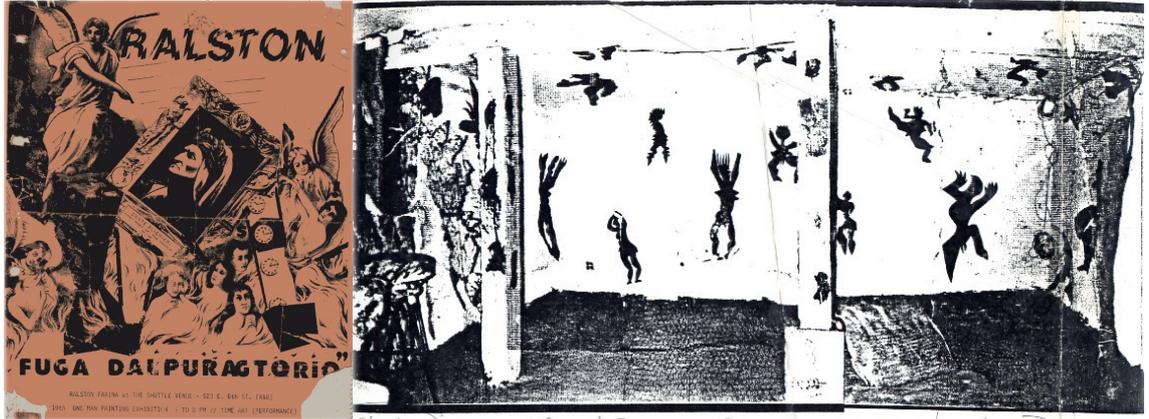


The Shuttle Theatre, New York 1984

In this period, Sandro Dernini tried to re-organize Plexus as a community-based non profit organization by inviting Bruce Nugent to be honorary chairperson and Sarah Farley and Mickey Pinero to act as vice chairpersons. In October, Plexus started again to operate at The Shuttle with a fall multi-arts program, made by: *Body Driven*, a dance project by Betsy Hulton and Patricia Nicholson Parker, featuring: Judith Renlay, Susan Seizer, Peggy Vogt, Betsy Hulton, Edrienne Altenhaus, Diane Torr, Eva Welchman; *Frame of Life*, a filmmakers program, featuring: Andrew Bergen, Julius Klein, Christine Vachon, Susan Graes, Liza Bear; *Collage of Happening*, a performance program, featuring: *Time Art* by Ralson Farina, *The Upside Down Show* by Julius Klein, *Do you think Nixon knows people were happier before he was president?* by Paul Miller, and Alien Comic; *The Last Song of the Swan*, a playwrights program, curated by Giuseppe Sacchi, featuring: *Soliloquies and Others Words Said at the Time* by Rei Povod; *King Salmon* by James A. Doogherty; *Hoodlum Hearts* by Louis E. Griffith; *Rent a Coffin* by Pedro Pietri; *Mephistopheles: The Artist in the First Person*, featuring Ralston Farina and Luca Pizzorno; *Mountains Men, Dreams, Magic Music* by Leoponar Witlarge; *Slimming Window* by Julius Klein, *Samarcanda* by Luca Pizzorno, and Liz & Val; *Cantos*, a poetry program, with a open reading, curated by Miguel Algarin, featuring: Miguel Pinero, Den Shot, Ray Bremser, Louis E. Griffith, Quincy Troumpe, Robert Press, Eilee Miles, Bob Holman; and *Magic Flutes*, a music program, featuring Butch Morris Ensemble, Graic Burg, Leo Panar, Gary Taylor, Earl Cross, Snoky Tate, Dennis Charles Trio, Jemeel Moondoc Quartet.

Escape from Purgatorio by Ralston Farina

Samarcanda by Luca Pizzorno



The Shuttle, New York 1984

Butch Morris and Will Connel joined the Lower East Side Music Committee and together it was organized the *Second Lower East Side Music Festival*, featuring: Chevere Makun Chevere, Michael Bocian Quartet, Ernst Bier Quartet, Jemeel Moondoc's Orchestra with Butch Morris, Jim Pepper Quartet, Karl Berger's Rhythm Changes with Ingrid Sertso, Jazz Doctors with Billy Bang -Frank Lowe -Wilber Morris and Thurman Barker, Juny Booth, Peter Kowald Sextet, Roy Campbell's Inner Force Band, Sound Concept by James McCoy, Art Jam by Arturo Lindsay.

The Upside Down Show by Julius Klein and Time Art by Ralston Farina



The Shuttle, New York 1984