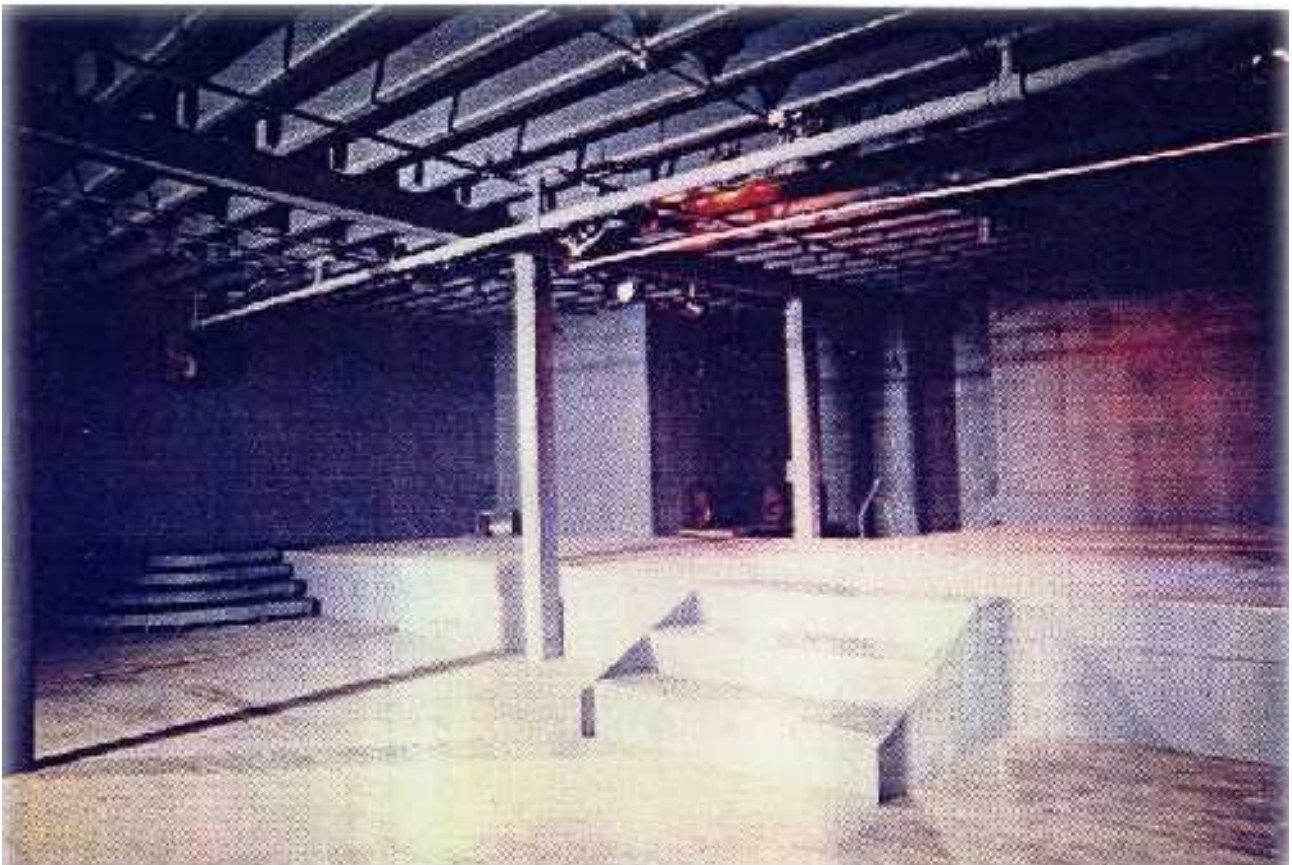


PLEXUS PERFORMANCE SPACE

In the spring of 1982, in New York, Sandro Dernini accepted the invitation from two architects, Roberto Brambilla and Gianni Longo, to open a new cultural center in a 7.000 sq.ft. loft, at 516 West 25th. Street, in the Chelsea neighbourhood, which was part of a larger real estate complex under development by them. Then, Richard Flood, an art critic, joined also this invitation and the Plexus project came up: a performance space with maximum flexibility to foster an international network of dreamers and realists, theoreticians and pragmatists.



Logo by Fred Troller, New York 1982



Plexus performance space, 516 West 25 St., Chelsea, New York 1982

Plexus Performance Space



Plexus performance space, 516 West 25 St., Chelsea, New York 1982

Statement of Mission of Plexus International Urban Forum

Plexus is about the city - any city, every city. It is about the wonder of a skyline that won't stop climbing and a blanket of pollution that can't stop spreading.

It's about an atmosphere that swell culture and swallows real estate.

It's about a dream that is as illogical as soft watches and as seductive as the promise of immortality.

Plexus is dedicated to the proposition that all cities are not created equal, only the people who inhabit them. It is further committed to the proposition that the people of cities are creative survivalists who refuse and acknowledge the laws of nature and who glory in adversity.

There is, in the collective heart of the people of the cities, a wild, unremitting thirst for the impossible contradictions that make them simultaneous victims and victors.

Plexus believes that the creative involvement of the individual can do more to enhance a responsive environment than all the bureaucratic machinations of infinity of public agencies.

To this end Plexus is designed to foster an international network of urban dreamers and realists, theoreticians and pragmatists.

Plexus means to proceed from observation through discussion and celebration. Its goals are the achievement of a heightened understanding of the possibilities of the city and the definition of alternatives which will accelerate the realization of those possibilities.

Plexus will initiate exhibition, lectures and seminars on urban issues as well as sponsor media and performance events. It will also promote the exchange and dissemination of information on innovative ideas, projects and products which can enrich and ennoble the urban experience. While Plexus-sponsored activities will initially utilize the Chelsea space, it is hoped that they will spread throughout the urban complex in a manner as unruly and spontaneous as the city itself.

Richard Flood, New York 1982

Plexus: a structure in the form of a network; any interlacing of parts.

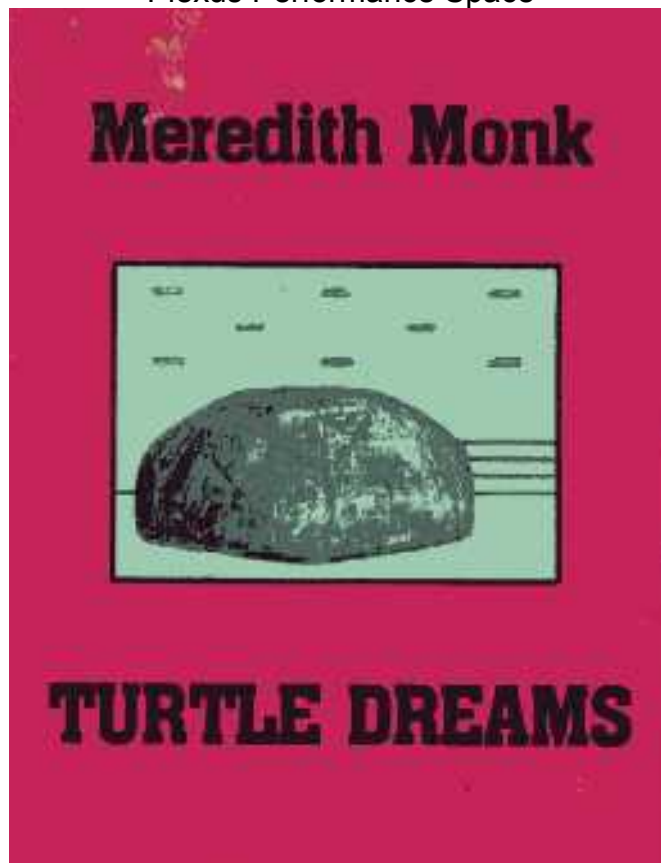
Inter: between or among.

National: big or important enough to have significance for a whole nation.

Urban: characteristic of the city or city life.

Forum: any medium for open discussion.

Plexus Performance Space



Plexus Opening by the world premiere of Meredith Monk's Turtle Dreams Performance, 1983



Art installation by Paolo Buggiani, 516 West 25 St., New York 1983

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Plexus Performance Space, New York 1983



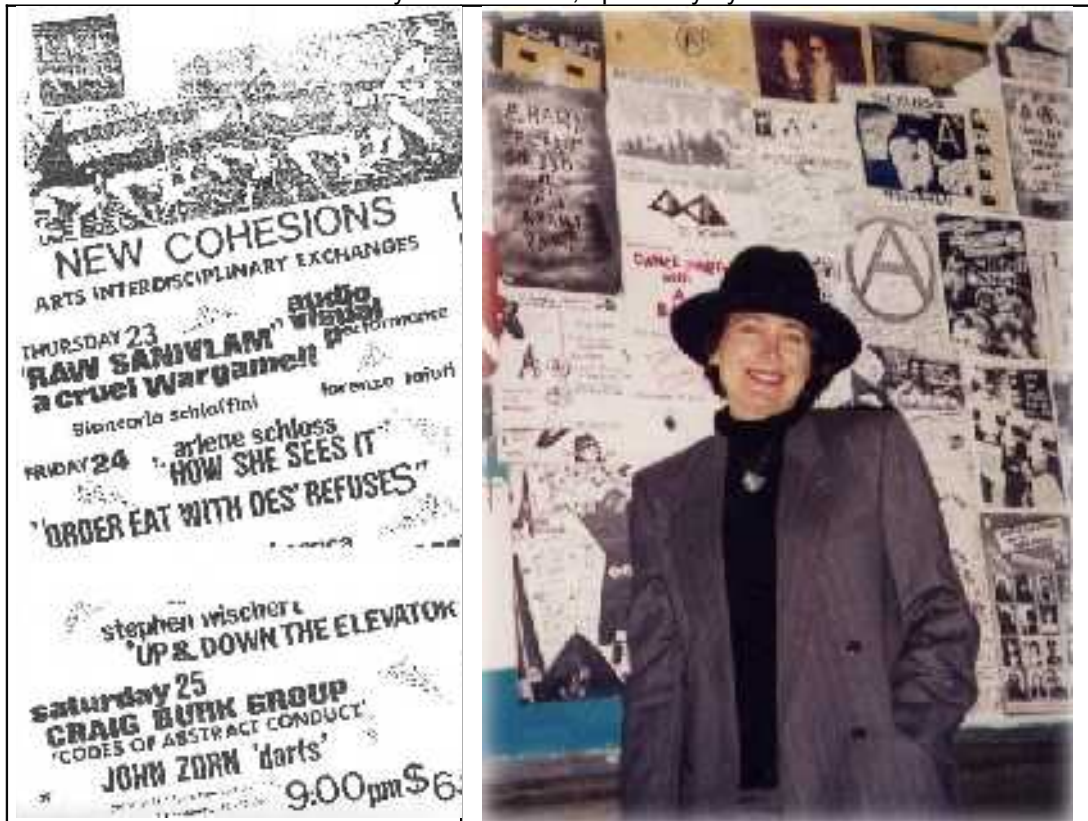
Mitch Ross, photos by Lynne Kanter

Art Videos show curated by Willoughby Sharp
516 West 25 St., New York 1983

Plexus Performance Space



Salomè by Maroon Azuri, photo by Lynne Kanter



Arleen Schloss



by Willem Brugman, 516 West 25 St., New York 1984

THE SHUTTLE THEATRE AND THE LOWER EAST SIDE COMMUNITY

In mid of 1984, Plexus performance space closed and The Shuttle Theatre was opened by Sandro Dernini and Beppe Sacchi, a journalist, in the basement of a burned building, at 523 East 6th Street, in the Lower East Side, managed by Mrs. Sarah Farley, a charismatic leader of the homesteader community organization L.A.N.D. ((Local Action for Neighbourhood Development). Then, Mickey Pinero, a Puerto Rican poet very well known in the community, gave to Sandro Dernini his Indian American statuette as house protector of the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, and its image became the logo of The Shuttle.



Sarah Farley, on the bottom , Rolando Politi and Lower East Side Community activists, New York, 1984



523 East 6th Street, New York, 1984

The Shuttle Theatre



Beppe Sacchi

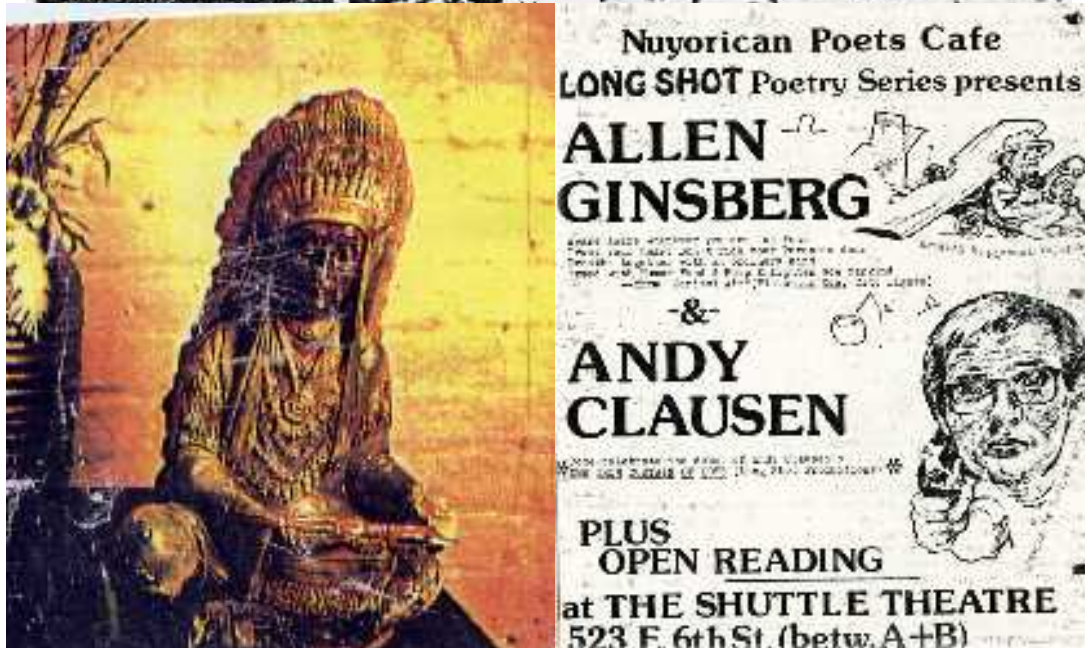
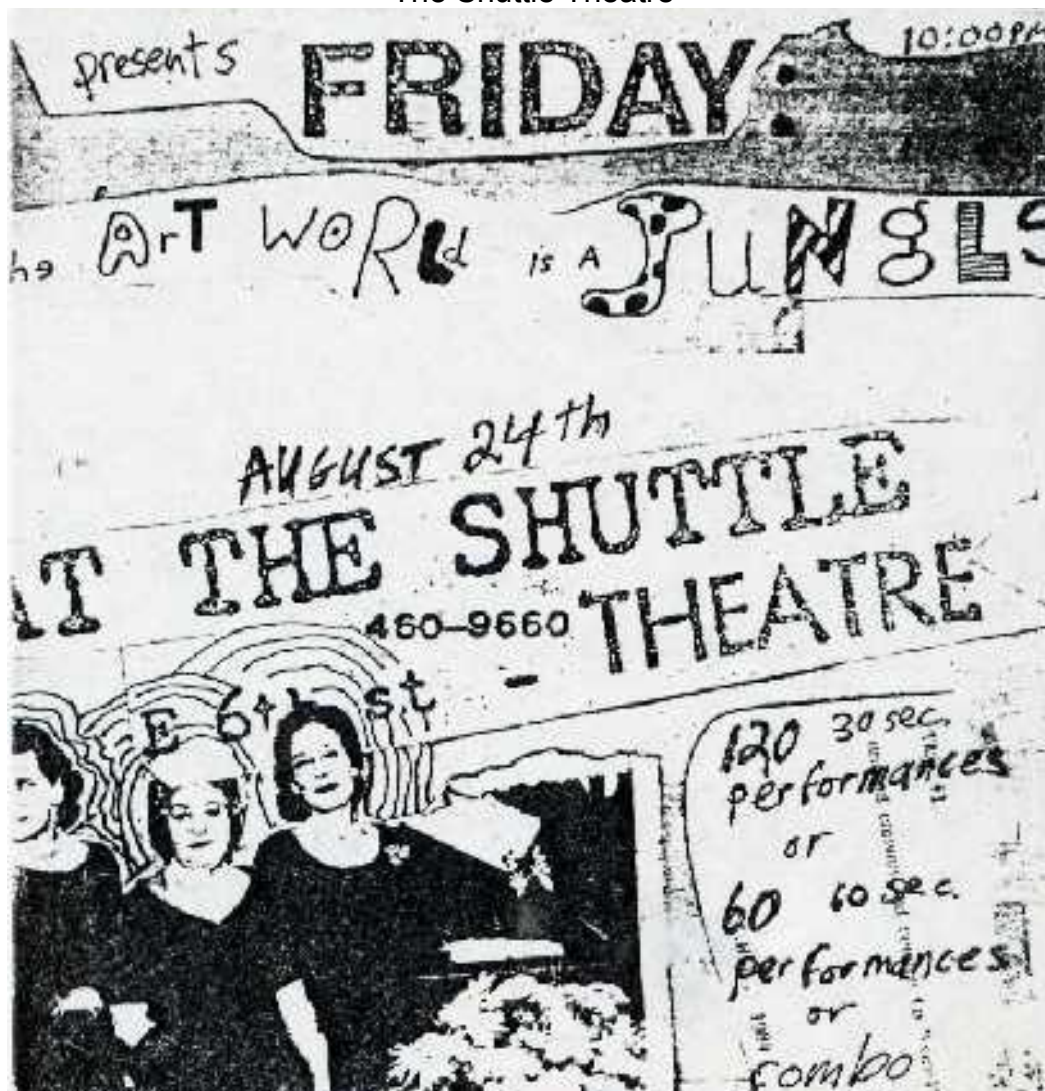


Sandro Dernini and Arleen Schloss



Luca Pizzorno, Rodrigo Solomon, 523 East 6th Street, New York, 1984, photos by Lynne Kanter

The Shuttle Theatre



The Shuttle, Lower East Side, New York 1984

The Shuttle Theatre



Paintings by Joan Waltemath, New York 1984

On August 25 of 1984, in front The Shuttle Theatre, on the occasion of a community cultural event to stop the increasing gentrification of the Lower East Side, it was issued by William Parker the statement *In Order to Survive*.



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

In Order to Survive, a Statement

by William Parker, New York 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...

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 motto was "black Music in Evolution"...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 community event was chaired by Sarah Farley and Bruce Richard Nugent from *FIRE !!*, the historical black renaissance magazine published in Harlem in 1926. As his contribution to the call *In Order to Survive* Don Cherry, a well-known world music artist, gave to Sandro Dernini a little Buddha statuette from Tibet, which was placed at The Shuttle's entrance, near to Mickey Pinero's indio, together with a Nuraghic warrior statuette brought by Raimondo Demuro, a Sardinian oral living tradition keeper from Sandro's native country.



Fire!! Magazine

Don Cherry photo by R. Ross

Nuraghic warrior

The Artist in the First Person Show



Performance by Arleen Schloss



Installation by Luca Pizzorno, The Shuttle Theatre, Lower East Side, New York 1984

In January of 1985, Angiola Churchill, co-director of the ICASA - International Center for Advanced Studies in Art at New York University, and chairperson of the NYU Department of Art and Art Education, invited Sandro Dernini for a lecture, entitled *The Artist in the First Person*. Then, Angiola Churchill invited him to join her Department as graduate assistant with a NYU scholarship for a Ph.D. art education study on his field of interest of “eating art”.



Angiola Churchill, New York 2005 Sandro Dernini, 1985, photo by Lynne Kanter

The Artist in the First Person

The Artist in the first person means there are no “mediators” between the artist and her/his artwork. Today, artworld interferences are making very difficult for all artists to be free to express themselves. It is very dangerous because it is also separating artists from their art and from the public.

Art market overstructures mechanism-isms have created the figure of the artist in the third person. The “second person” is the art market with its many different masks of the artworld and these overstructures in art are increasing the separation of the artist from the community and from the everyday life.

The art market is more sophisticated than the traditional business market, because it is made by the intellectuals of the artworld. It is a face of the old dominant economic capitalist power which pushes and forces the artists like slaves to accept in their creative process the production order coming from the art market. The art market is forcing too much and too fast the exposition in public of artworks before they are ready.

“The artist in the first person”, at the same time, is the producer, the consumer and the final product of his/her artwork, and not just a passive vehicle for the artmarket to make money. The economic value of a sold artwork cannot be the only way to measure the artistic value of an artist.

If the artist has to choose between the market’s acceptance and the freedom for her/his artwork, it is critical to not forget in the moment of the decision that the artist exists also without the market. Instead, the art market cannot exist without the artist who produces the artworks necessary to be traded in the market.

We, artists in the first person, must defend the research process in art. Community-based art spaces, atelier des arts, cultural houses, experimental labs and art departments, should be the places where the intellectual freedom of research for the artist is guaranteed.

Sandro Dernini, New York 1985

PLEXUS ART OPERAS AND PURGATORIO SHOWS

Goya Time, 1985, New York, the first Plexus Art Opera, was presented at CUANDO, on June 13 of 1985, as a multi artforms event made by three collaborative pieces: *La Maja* by Gretta Safarty; *Los Capriccios* by Butch Morris and *Time a Way to Fly* by Sandro Dernini, with the participation of more than 80 artists, among musicians, poets, singers, dancers, actors, visual artists, focused on freely conducted interpretations of the same theme: *La Maja*. CUANDO - Culturas Unidas Aspireran Nuestro Destino Original - was a Puerto Rican community civic cultural center located on 9 Second Avenue, on the corner of Houston Street and the Bowery, in a 5 floors abandoned building.



Artwork by Gretta Sarfaty, CUANDO, New York 1985



R. Fischer, L.Kanter, K.Kuykendall, M.Max , A. Iacchia, M. Mayers, New York 1985, photo by J. Day

Plexus Art Opera n. 1: Goya Time, 1985, New York



CUANDO, New York 1985, Sandro Dernini, photo by J. Day

...during this process came out the theory of the art opera which characterized Plexus collaboration. It was characterized by multiplex levels of perspectives of the event and its particular surroundings open to be followed in all possible direction by the audience. The result became a cooperative art product of a collective imagination. Plexus artform was truly about understanding a particular moment in time and history. What was new in this artform is a significant individual collective art expression of different vision of the same idea as it was in Goya's Time presented by 23 visual artists. The artists working with each other was the big new artform in Plexus...

Butch Morris, New York



Butch Morris photo by Lynne Kanter

Plexus Art Opera n. 1: The Structure of The Art Market, Goya Time 1985 New York

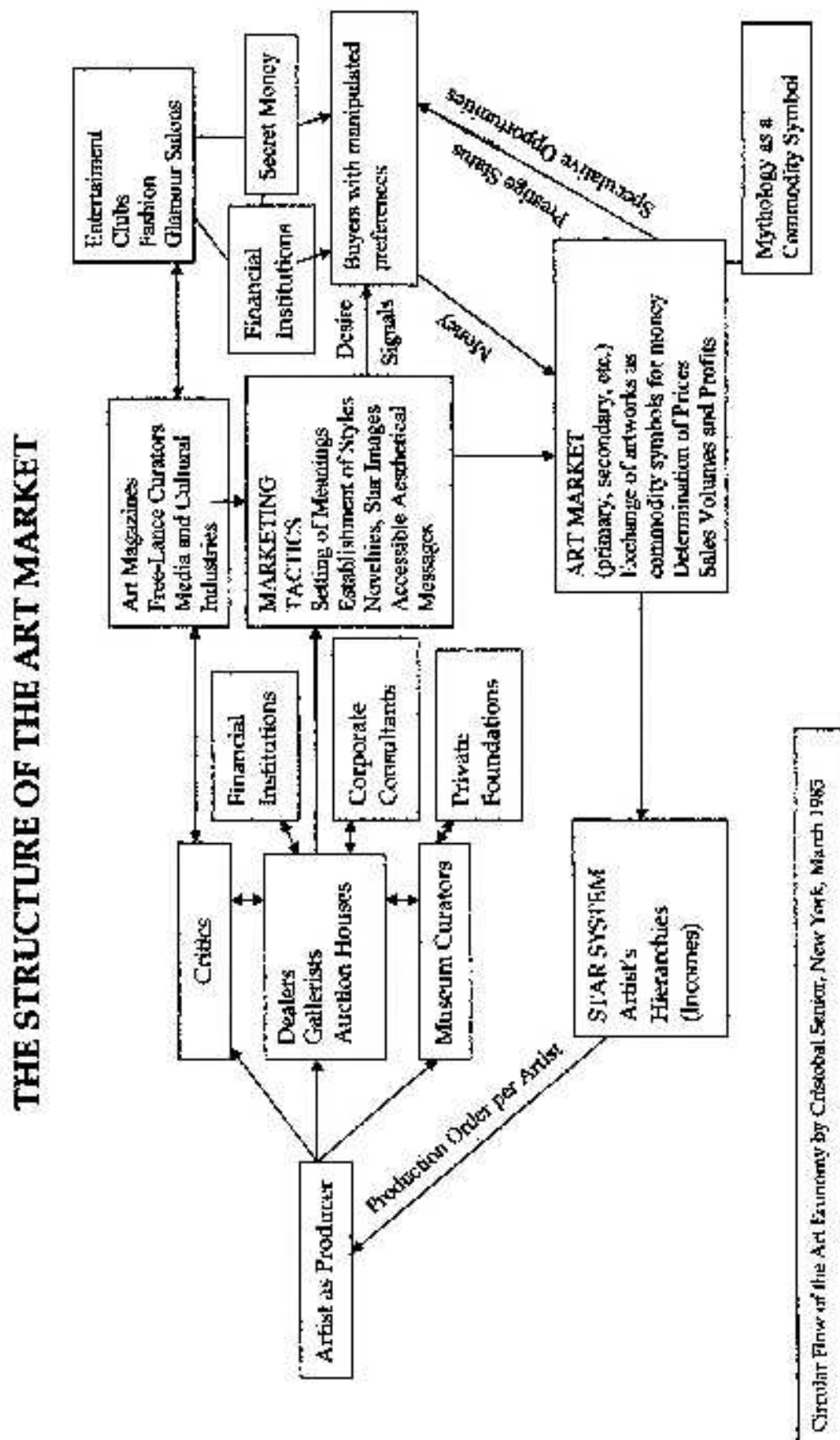


Diagram by Cristobal Senior, CUANDO, New York, 1985

Plexus Art Opera n. 1: Goya Time, 1985, New York



Dance performance by Gloria McLean, CUANDO, New York 1985, photo by J. M. Day



La Maja by Baldo Deodato



La Maja by Pedro Cano



La Maja by Eve Vaterlaus, CUANDO, New York 1985

Plexus Art Opera n. 1: Goya Time, 1985, New York



La Maja by Gretta Sarfaty

La Maja by Julius Klein, CUANDO, New York 1985, photos by J. Day

Plexus Compressionisme

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..." 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...

Leonard Horowitz New York

In the beginning of June of 1985, at Willoughby Sharp's studio, Leonard Horowitz, Sandro Dernini, Arleen Schloss, Willoughby Sharp, Albert DiMartino and Richard Skidmare, decided to organize at the cultural community civic center C.U.A.N.D.O. a large community art event dedicated to Ralston Farina, recently passes out, and to his dream to escape from time and gravity. On July 17, in the night of no moon, the event *Purgatorio Show '85, New York* was performed by 350 artists as a 3 hours exhibition open call for a future cultural community house in the Lower East Side, finalized to draw more public attention on its cultural gentrification which was leaving the community and artists without working and living places.

Plexus Art Opera n. 2: Purgatorio Show '85 New York



CUANDO, Lower East Side, New York 1985, photo by Leonard Horowitz



Ivy Winick, Sandro Dernini, Ray Kelly, Shuttle Theatre, New York, 1985

Plexus Art Opera n. 2: Purgatorio Show '85 New York



photos by Albert Di Martino



Sandro Dernini, Bruce Nugent, Willoughby Sharp, Lenny Horowitz, Al Di Martino
CUANDO, New York 1985

Plexus Art Opera n. 2: Purgatorio Show '85 New York



Rolando Politi, David Boyle



Gloria McLean, photo by J. Day



CUANDO, New York 1985, photos by Al Di Martino

Dedicated to Ralston Farina



Installation by Eve Vaterlaus



Nada, Ken Hiratsuka, CUANDO, photo by A. Di Martino



Performance by Nada, CUANDO, New York 1985, Luca Pizzorno, photos by Jim C

Plexus Art Opera n. 2: Purgatorio Show '85 New York



Storefront for Architecture, Joe Strand, CUANDO, New York 1985, photos Al Di Martino

Plexus Art Opera n. 2: Purgatorio Show '85 New York



Installation by Mark Kostabi



Ellen Christi, Wess Power, CUANDO, New York 1985, photos by Al Di Martino

Plexus Art Opera n. 2: Purgatorio Show '85 New York



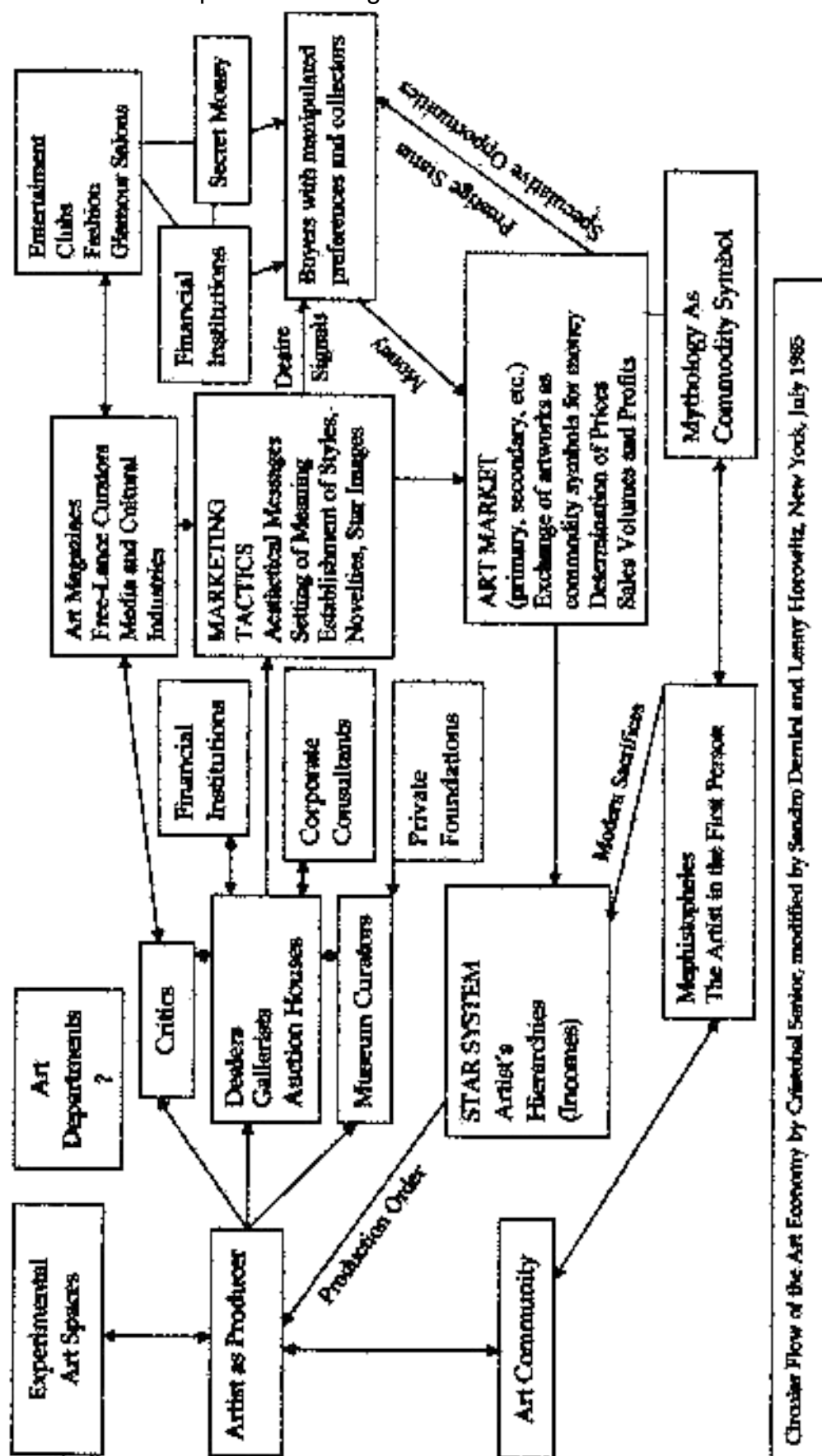
Marta Stuart



Arturo Lindsay, CUANDO, New York 1985

PLEXUS COMMUNITY-BASED ART MARKET STRATEGY

Plexus Purgatorio Show, New York 1985



Circular Flow of the Art Economy by Cristobal Senior; modified by Sandro Dernini and Lenny Horowitz, New York, July 1985

Diagram by Cristobal Senior, modified by Sandro Dernini, CUANDO, New York, 1985