

The Redefinition of a Plexus Campbell's Soup Can



Sandro Dernini, Barnaby Ruhe, C.U.A.N.D.O. New York 1988, photos by Lynne Kanter



CUANDO, New York 1988, photo by Renata Landenberger


PLEXUS ART SLAVERY MANIFESTO

In May of 1988, in New York, Plexus launched the Open Call Manifesto for an International Art Slavery Group Shot to produce collectively, in different parts of the world, a multi-fractal 900 artists faces' photo to be sold in a public auction for freedom of art, within the Plexus event, at the Pan African Festival of Arts and Cultures, in Dakar, in December of 1988.


THE RIVINGTON SCHOOL

OPEN CALL FOR

PLEXUS INTERNATIONAL ART SLAVERY MANIFESTO GROUP SHOT



CALENDAR 1988 "THE SERPENT" ART CO-OPERA # 5 (5 ACTIONS) ENDS AT PAN AFRICAN FESTIVAL OF ART & CULTURE, DAKAR



BRING YOUR SERPENT 188

On Saturday May 21, 1988, at 6 AM, the Plexus Art Slavery Group Shot will be held at 172 Forsythe Street, New York City. The Plexus Art Slavery Group Shot is a multi-fractal 900 artists faces' photo to be sold in a public auction for freedom of art, within the Plexus event, at the Pan African Festival of Arts and Cultures, in Dakar, in December of 1988.

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SATURDAY MAY 21, 1988, 6 AM.
(raindate may 22 6 AM)
172 FORSYTHE STREET

New York 1988, graphic by Frank Shifreen

The Rivington School



RIVINGTON SCHOOL NEW SCULPTURE GARDEN OPENING

172 Forsythe Street, New York 1988, photo by Toyo

On May 21 of 1988, at the Rivington School, a monumental sculpture garden, located in abandoned parking lot in the Forsythe Street, in downtown New York, it was staged the first group shot, taken by Ivan Dalla Tana.

New York Rivington School Photo Shot for Plexus Art Slavery Manifesto



Rivington School, New York May 1988, photo by Ivan Dalla Tana

Rome Metateatro Photo Shot for Plexus Art Slavery Manifesto



Performance by Paolo Buggiani



Renato Mambor, Metateatro, Rome 1988, photos by AGF A. Mordenti



Artworks by Carlo Cusatelli, Rome 1988

On June 15 of 1988, at the Metateatro, in Rome, the second group shot of artists, including several historical participants of the 1978 LIACA cultural slaves market event, was taken by Adriano Mordenti, in front to the Rivington School's group shot photo.

Rome Metateatro Photo Shot for Plexus Art Slavery Manifesto



Metateatro, Rome 1988, photos by AGF Adriano Mordenti

Plexus Open Call for the Manifesto of the Slaves of Art



Artwork by Fabrizio Bertuccioli, Rome 1988

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.

Fabrizio Bertuccioli, Rome 1988

On June 18 of 1988, in Sardinia, the third historical group photo was taken, in the harbor of Carloforte, on board the Elisabeth boat, symbolically “dressed” as the Plexus art slave boat, ready to depart for the House of the Slaves of Goree, Dakar, Senegal.

The Elisabeth Boat Photo Shot for Plexus Art Slavery Manifesto



Carloforte, Sardinia 1988

Sardinia Photo Shot for Plexus Art Slavery Manifesto



Salvatore Parodo, Antonio Caboni, on board the Elisabeth boat, Carloforte, Sardinia 1988



Mutua Cinema, Carloforte, Sardinia 1988

Coliseum Photo Shot for Plexus Art Slavery Manifesto



Coliseum, Rome 1988

Plexus Art Money



Artwork by Micaela Serino, Rome 1988

Plexus Art Money



Artwork by Micaela Serino, Rome 1988

Plexus Immunological Art Messenger



Gaetano Brundu



Artwork by Gaetano Brundu, Cagliari, Sardinia 1988

Plexus Ancestral Art Messenger



Artwork by Arturo Lindsay, New York 1988

Plexus Mail Art



Artworks by Luigi Mazzarelli, Cagliari, Sardinia 1988

Plexus Art Deconstruction



Installation by Sandro Dernini, Mago d'Oz, Rome 1988

Plexus Art Deconstruction



Installation by Sandro Dernini, Mago d'Oz, Rome 1988

Departure from Sardinia to Dakar



Performance by Andrea Portas, Carloforte, Sardinia 1988, photos by Stefano Grassi

Landing in Dakar



Pathe Diop, Medina-Dakar 1988

In the summer of 1988, the FESPAC Pan African Festival was cancelled in Dakar. Anyway, Plexus continued its art journey. Then, Sandro Dernini with Assane MBaye got from the marabout Serin Karim M'Backe his consensus for having, on the occasion of the final group shot in the House of the Slaves, a theatrical art parade, from the Medina to Goree, performing the historical exile to Gabon in 1895 of Cheick Ahmadou Bamba, the spiritual father and founder of the Mouridism. The theatrical event was directed by Omar Seck of the National Theatre Daniel Sorano.

Landing in the Medina of Dakar



Zulu MBaye, Youssouph Traorè, African Cultural Center Malick Sy, Medina, Dakar 1988

Plexus Theatrical Parade to the House of the Slaves



Omar Seck, Y. Traore, Langouste MBow, Zulu MBaye, Kre and Assane MBaye, Pathè Diop



Rue 17 x 8, Medina-Dakar 1988



Assane MBaye, Awa and Marcel MBaye, Goree, Dakar 1988

Plexus Theatrical Parade of the Exile in Gabon of Cheik Amoudou Bamba



Langouste MBow, Assane MBaye, Zulu MBaye, Pathe Diop, Goree-Dakar 1988



Theatrical performance directed by Omar Seck, Goree, Dakar 1988

Plexus Theatrical Parade of the Exile in Gabon of Cheik Amoudou Bamba



Langouste MBow, Assane MBaye, Zulu MBaye, Pathe Diop, Goree-Dakar 1988

OPEN LETTER TO ALL ARTISTS OF THE WORLD

***FROM THE HOUSE OF THE SLAVES
GOREE, DAKAR, 30 AUGUST 1988***



Plexus International launches a call to all artists of the world to come to Dakar, from 23 December 1988, to 3 January 1989, to contribute to the creation of an Art World Bank.

After the first international meeting of the “Slaves of Art” in Sardinia, Italy, held on 4 July 1987, with the participation of 160 artists from 23 nationalities and after the departure of the metaphoric trip in the history and mythology of “the boat of the slaves of art,” from New York on February 1986, it will be a second international event of artists as independent producers to debate the redefinition of a new type of art contract, to defend the rights of the artists.

All artists are invited to participate, within the scope of this international event, to realize the Plexus Art Co-Opera N°5, “The Serpent,” a simultaneous and synchronized presentation of art and science, which will be presented as a parade-show on 1 January 1989, in the island of Gorée, Dakar.

The final act will be performed in the House of the Slaves as homage dedicated to the freedom of all human being.

House of the Slaves, Goree, Dakar 1988

On August 30 of 1988, the Plexus historical group photo shot was taken inside the House of the Slaves in Goree. There, it was issued an *Open Letter to All Artists of the World*. Off the coast of Senegal, facing Dakar, the island of Gorée was, from the 15th to the 19th century, the largest slave trading centre on the African coast. From the *Door of No Return* of the House of the Slaves, millions of Africans were deported into the New World.

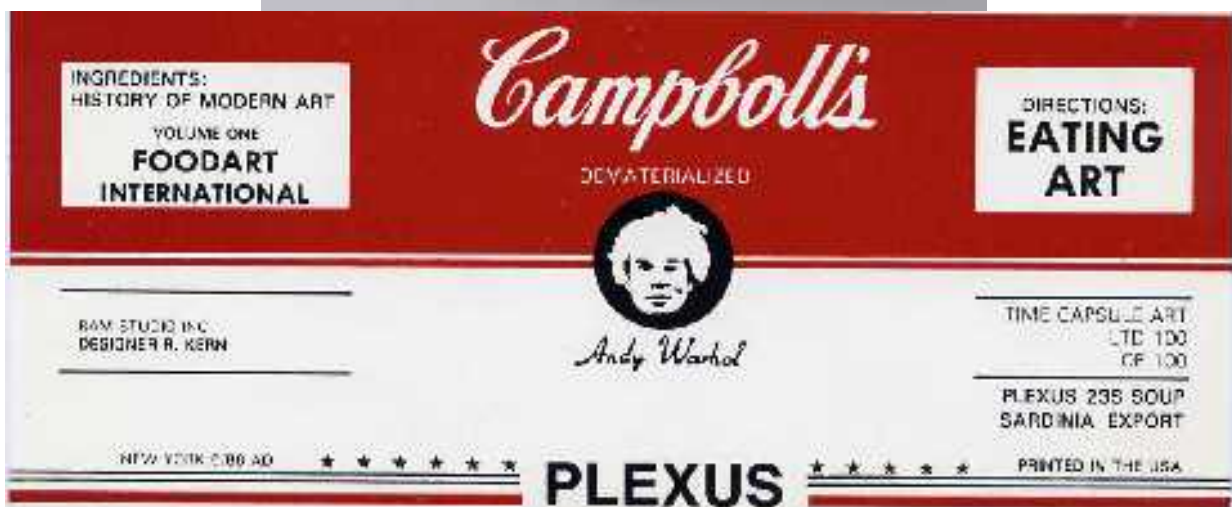
The House of the Slaves Photo Shot for Plexus Art Slavery Manifesto



House of the Slaves, Goree, Dakar, 1988

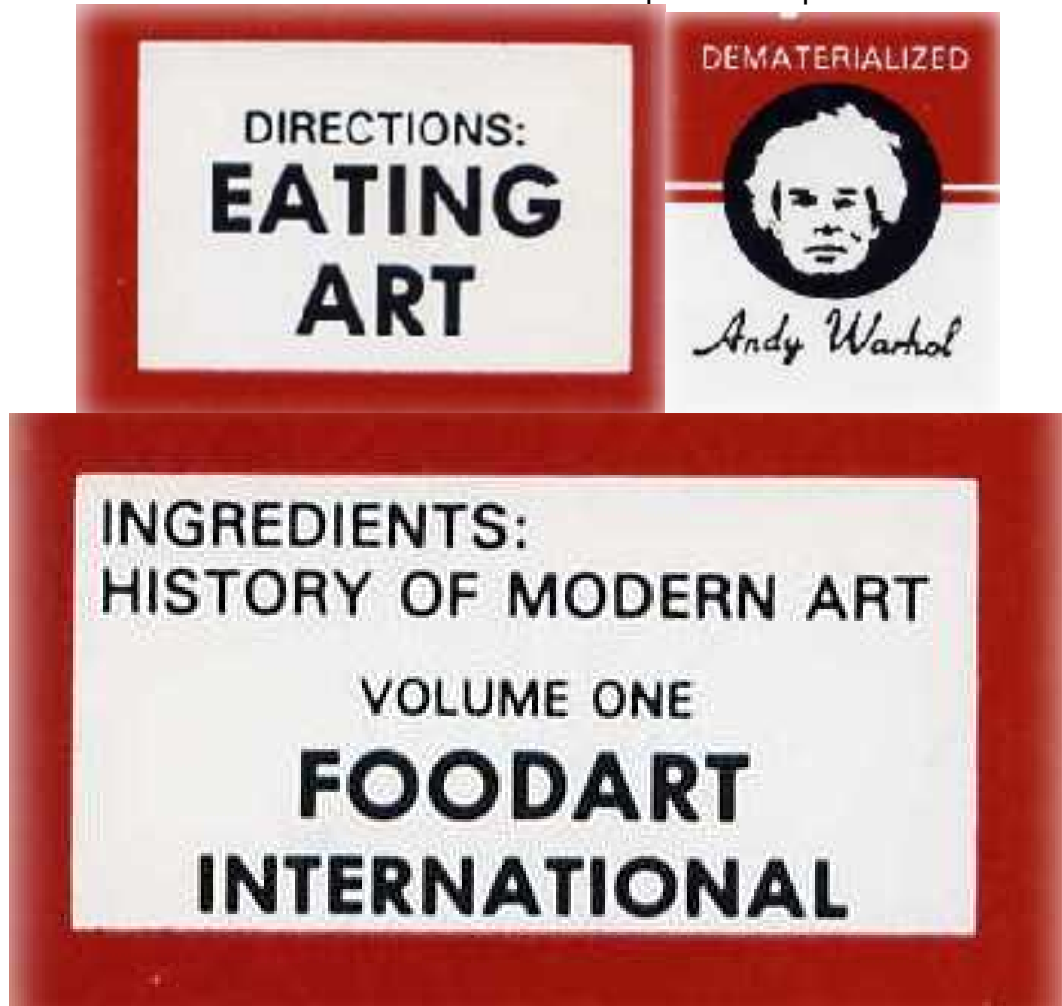
In New York, in September of 1988, Sandro Dernini presented his limited edition of 100 labels of *Plexus Campbell Soup Can*, conceived as a recall of his 1987 Andy Warhol's dematerialization phenomenological inquiry. In the label, instead of Campbell, with the same character, it was written "Campbell's."

Plexus Campbell's Soup Can



Concept by Sandro Dernini, designed by Robert Kern, printed by Ram Studio, New York 1988

Deconstruction of a Plexus Campbell's Soup Can



New York 1988

Plexus Campbell's Soup Can Celebration



New York 1988

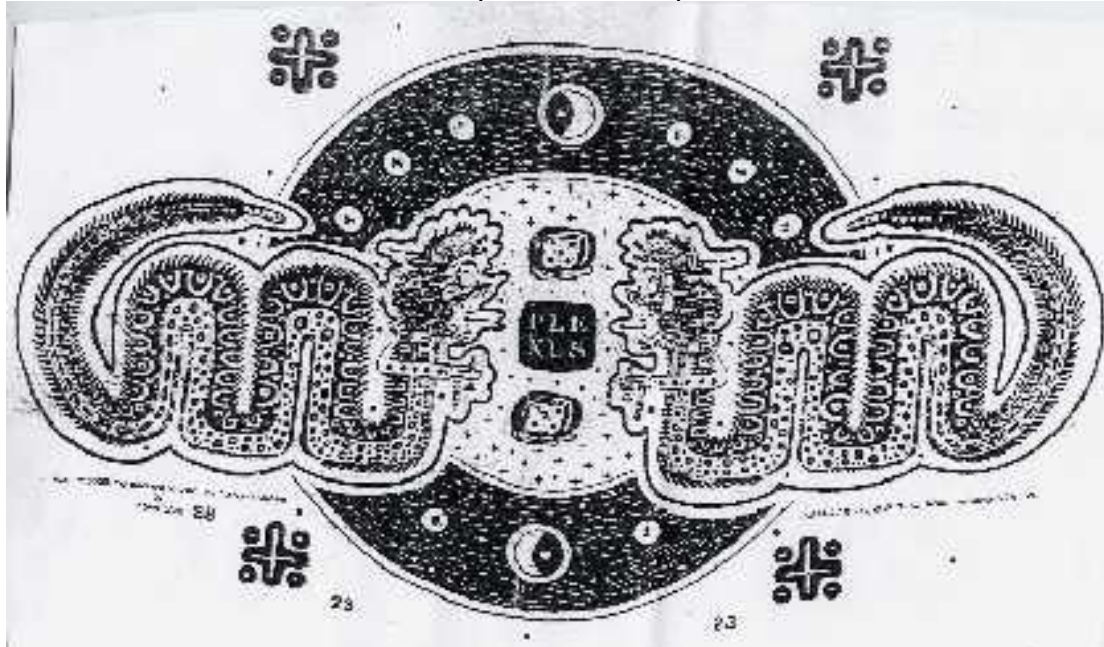
Plexus Photo Compressionist Report to the Lower East Side Community



Joanne Freedom, Sandro Dernini, Barry Lynn, Gary Beck, Melody D'Arnell
Gary Beck, Brian Goodfellow, Lynne Kanter, Judy Levy, Albert DiMartino, New York 1988

In the Fall of 1988, in order to promote the continuation of the Plexus Art Slaves boat voyage, it was organized *The Serpent*, as a travelling art co-opera, conceived in five acts, in New York, Sardinia and Senegal. On November 3, the first act was staged at the community cultural center CUANDO as a recall of past Plexus Purgatorio Shows.

Plexus Serpent Art Co-Opera N.5



Graphics by Richard Milone, New York 1988

The Serpent Act 1: Plexus Purgatorio Show 88



Leonard Horowitz as The Marlboro Man, New York 1988, photo by Lynne Kanter



Stephen Di Lauro, C.U.A.N.D.O. New York 1988

The Serpent Act 1: Plexus Purgatorio Show 88



Shock Theatre Group

Lorenzo Pace



Garrick Beck, CUANDO, New York 1988

The Serpent Act 1: Plexus Purgatorio Show 88



Lynne Kanter



Installation by Lorenzo Pace

CUANDO, New York 1988



Arturo Lindsay

On November 11 of 1988, at the Snow Ben Room of the Bobst Library of New York University, it was staged the second act, as an international interactive art event, made in collaboration with the Department of Art and Art professions and the Department of Music and Performing Art Professions of New York University, the Department of Physics of the University of Cagliari, and the Dax Group of Carnegie Mellon University.

The Serpent Act 2: Il Viaggio del Serpente



Dinu Ghezzo, John Gilbert, Sandro Dernini



Bobst Library, New York University, New York 1988

The Serpent Act 2: Il Viaggio del Serpente



Dinu Ghezzo's NYU orchestra happening

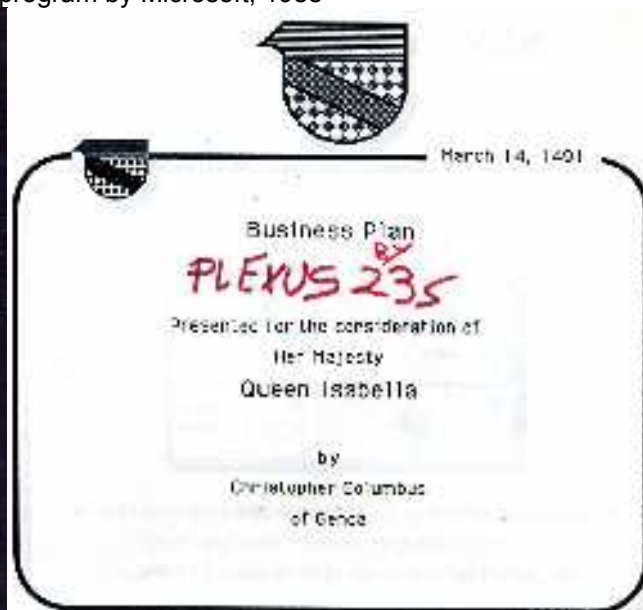


Arturo Lindsay, Miguel Algarin, Bobst Library, New York University, New York 1988

A Columbus Experimental Software Business Plan for the Serpent Journey



Demo software program by Microsoft, 1988



Artwork by Ivan dalla Tana Malvern Ludsen, George Chaikin, New York University, New York 1988

**Experimental Art Exchanges among New York University,
Carnegie Mellon University and University of Cagliari, Sardinia**



Franco and Valeria Meloni, Antonello Dessi, Giovanna Caltagirone, Annamaria Caracciolo, Antonio Caboni, Anna Saba, Andrea Portas, Grazia Medda, Cagliari 1988

The Serpent Act 2: Il Viaggio del Serpente



Gianfranco Mantegna, Lynne Kanter, Franco Ciarlo, Bobst Library, New York University, New York 1988

The Serpent Act 2: Il Viaggio del Serpente



Ivan della Tana, Franco Ciarlo, Gianfranco Mantegna, Baldo Deodato, Luca Pizzorno, Antonia Carmi, Lynn Kanter, Andrea Grassi, Miguel Algarin, Bobst Library, New York University, New York 1988

Three days after, on November 14, the third act of the Serpent travelling event landed on board the Eliabeth boat, in the harbour of Carloforte, in the island of San Pietro, off Sardinia, on the occasion of the celebration of the Madonna of the Slave.

The Serpent Act 3: The Madonna of the Slave



Sandro Dernini, Daniela Sansone, Mariaelisa Hobbelink, Pietro Cappai, Mario Brai, Salvatore Parodo, Carloforte, Island of San Pietro, Sardinia 1988

The Serpent Act 3: The Madonna of the Slave



Art altar by Sandro Dernini, Island of San Pietro, Sardinia, 1988

Eating Art



Performance by Sandro Derrini, Carloforte, Sardinia 1988

On December 17, in the abandoned "piazza" of San Sepolcro, in Cagliari, Sardinia, the forth act *Tradition & Modernity, Encounters among Artists* was organized by Tommaso Meloni and Antonio Caboni as a revitalization artists open call.

The Serpent Act 4: Tradition & Modernity, Encounters among Artists



Performance by Tommaso Meloni and Antonio Caboni



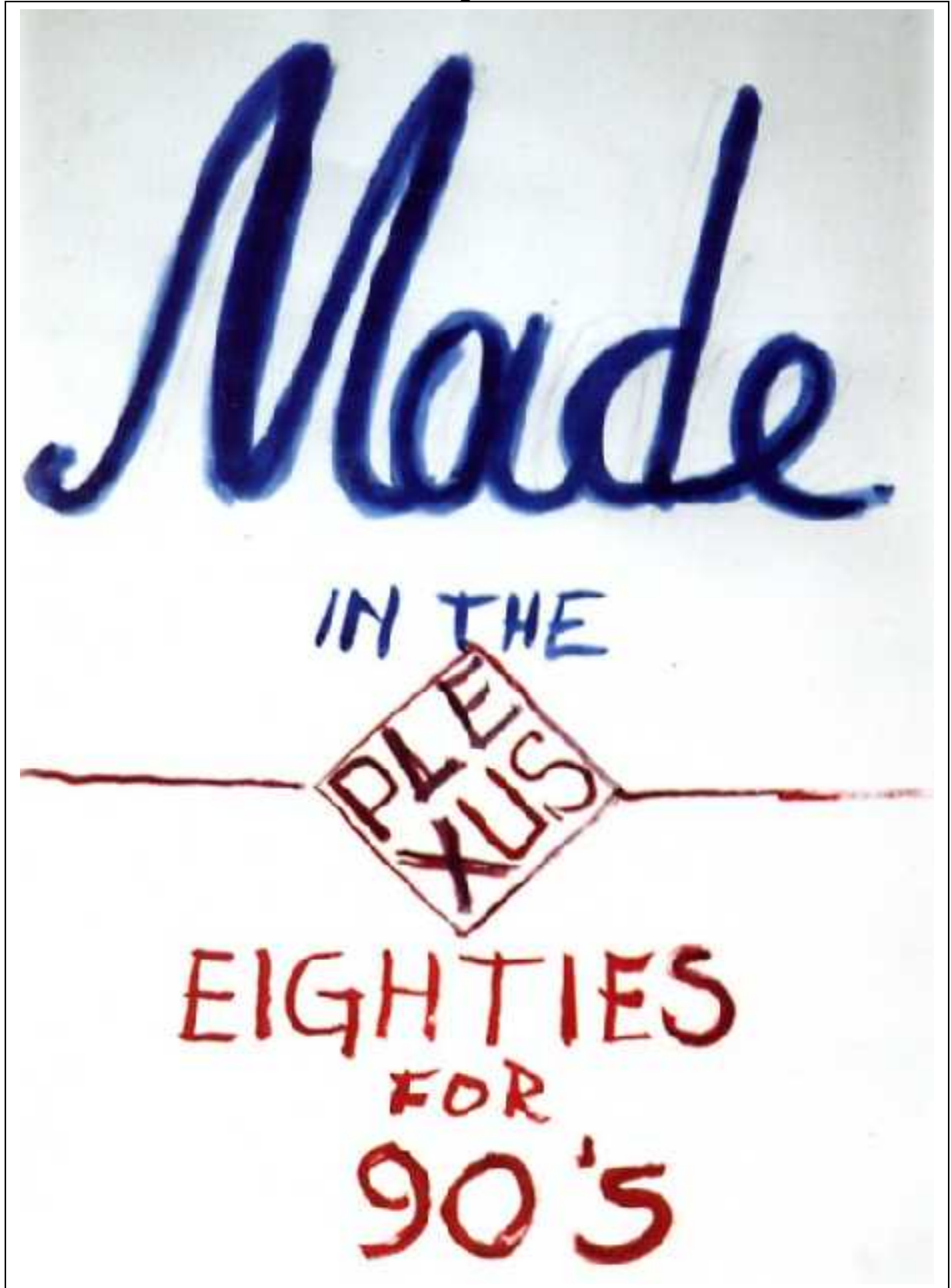
Daniela Fantini , Cagliari, Sardinia 1988

Made in the Eighties for the 90s



Sandro Dernini, Rome 1988

Made in the Eighties for the 90s



Artwork by Sandro Dernini, Rome 1988

Made in the Eighties for the 90s



Betta Polverelli and Sandro Dernini, Rome 1988



Annetta Ducrot, Maurizio Gabrielli, Marta



Marisa Carrozza, Luigi Accattino, Beta Polverelli, Sandro Dernini, Rome 1988

Made in the Eighties for the 90s



Raul Calabrò, Deborah Mellen, Annetta Ducrot, Maurizio Gabrielli, Daniele Comelli, Lucie Gartner, Sandro Dernini, Marta, Betta e Giacomo Polverelli, Paola Agarossi, Rome 1988

Made in the Eighties for the 90s



Marta, L. Papadia, Roberto Farina, A. Ducrot, Madoo, Micaela Serino, Fakher Al Koudsi, S. Dernini



Rome, 1988

Plexus Photo Compressionism



Plexus contributed to the integration of different uses of art media in new art forms, actively extending the point where documentation stops and art begins. As in the case of the Plexus tradition to make photos called group shots which turned into an art form. It was Leonard Horowitz who pioneered this Plexus compressionist use of the photo of the photo. In each event, Plexus members assembled together for large photos, like family picnic photos. Groups of Plexus artists answering the open call were photographed together. These "group shots" became bigger and bigger. By 1988 Plexus artists were intentionally holding up the photos of the previous group shots while creating new group shots. These photos were then brought to subsequent group shots achieving the effect a group of people holding a group shot which was holding a group shot and so on. Producing the effect of compressing into one photo content with a lens could be amplified again.

David Boyle, New York



Micaela Serino and Giancarlo Schiaffini pointing themselves in the 1988 Metateatro Shot, Rome 1988

Plexus Art Freedom Toy Boat



Andrea Portas and Stefano Grassi, Cagliari 1988



Graphics by Andrea Portas, Cagliari 1988

The last fifth act of *the Serpent* was realized, finally, on January 3 of 1989, at the House of the Slaves of Gorée as an happening, without any authorization. Assane M'Baye coming from the rocks at the ocean side, where slaves used to be deported in the direction of the Americas, performed the arrival a little art toy boat to "*the Door of No Return*", in front of which it was displaced on the ground an art installation made with artworks, records and relics collected during the Plexus travelling event, as a first stone for a future World Art Bank to be located symbolically in Gorée.

The Serpent Act 5: The House of the Slaves, Goree-Dakar



Assane M'Baye



W.Brugman, Awa M'Baye, Assane M'Baye, Langouste M'Bow, V. Meloni, Y. Traorè, Gorée, 1989

The Serpent Act 5: The House of the Slaves



Willem Brugman, Awa MBaye, Zulu MBaye, Tairo Diop, Franco Meloni, Assane MBaye, Langouste MBow, Valeria Meloni, Anna Piccioni, Goree, Dakar 1989

Presentation in Dakar of the Plexus World Art Bank Project



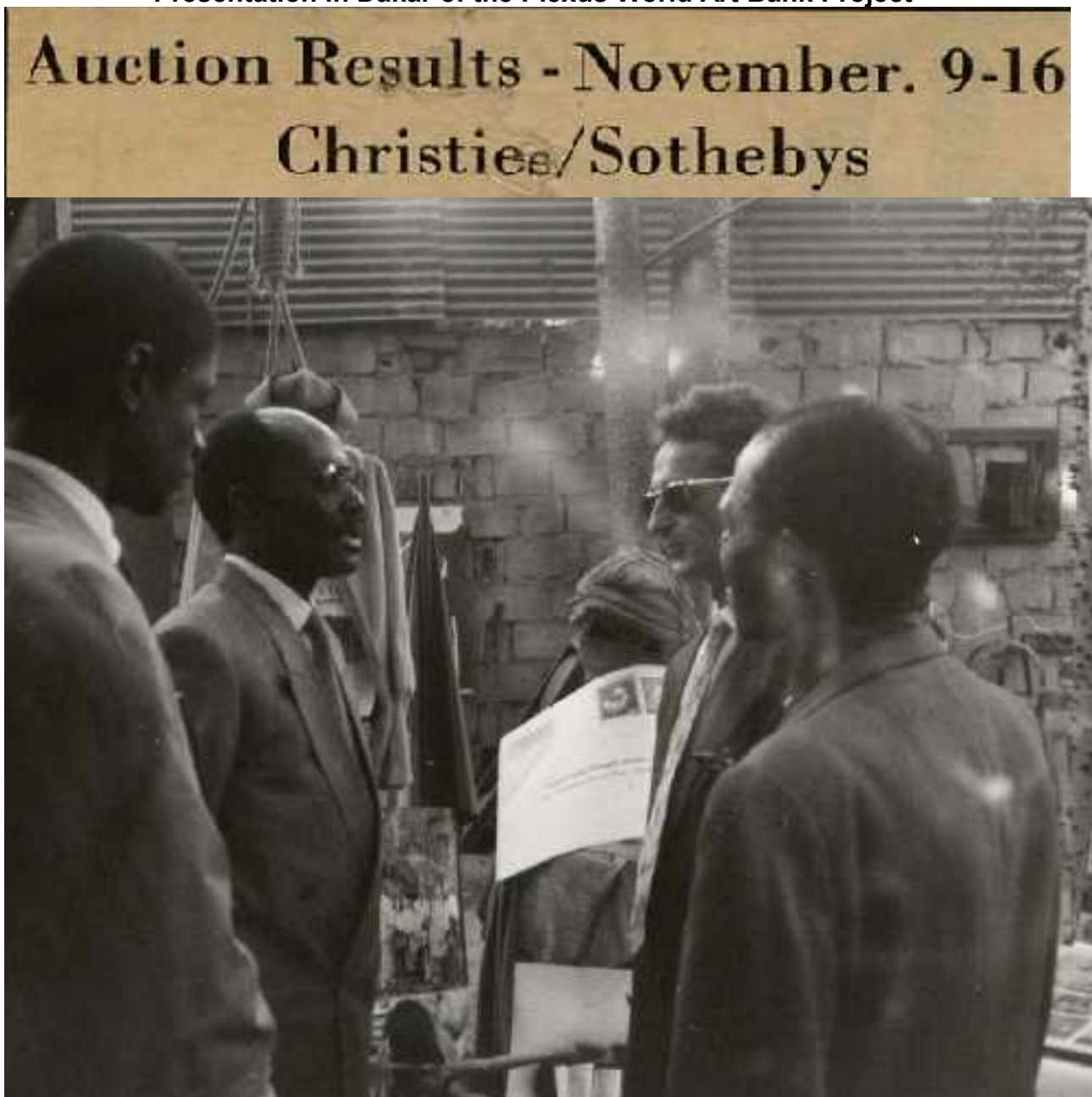
Installation by Langouste MBow, Atelier Agit Art, Dakar 1989

In early January of 1989, at the Jo Accam's Agit Art Gallery, in Dakar, it was organized a press conference to present the Plexus project to open in Goree a World Art Bank, created and managed directly by the artists in the first person.

By pointing out the last art market reports from Christies/Sotheby's auctions and recalling the poor life of Vincent Van Gogh, Sandro Dernini recalled to the Minister Aliasse Ba the controversial bid of 57 millions dollars paid for the Van Gogh's painting *Iris*, with some rumours about a substantial insider financial participation of the same auction house.

By considering the House of the Slaves of Goree as the symbol for all existing forms of human exploitations and how behind any artwork there was an human being, the artist, traded and exploited just as an other commodity, it was proposed the redefinition of a new art contract, to be renegotiated at the House of the Slaves, as foundation of a future World Art Bank.

Presentation in Dakar of the Plexus World Art Bank Project



Minister Aliasse Ba and Sandro Dernini, Atelier Agit Art, Dakar 1989

Presentation in Dakar of the Plexus World Art Bank Project



Installation by Langouste MBow and Sandro Dernini, Atelier Agit Art, Dakar 1989

Plexus Mythological Art Journey Continues...



Sandro Dernini, Medina-Dakar 1989