



In the spring 1994, at the Alfa Diallo's House of Originals, in the Lower East Side of New York, these two boxes were opened by Sandro Dernini, Jose Rodriguez, Luis Vergara Frank Pio, and John Shuttlewol participants of the 1993 closing event of "Plexus Black Box" at the NYU Rosenberg Gallery, and we made an inventory of what was inside.



Given the large number of participants, records and relics of the project under study, dispersed in many places without any inventory, Sandro Dernini first step was to identify the primary sources and one source was Plexus people. Due to the large number of Plexus participants living in different parts of the world, with his NYU Dissertation Committee it was agreed also to delimit the inquiry to the collection and interpretation of recollections only of those identified from records and relics of the “Plexus Black Box” sealed in two boxes at Rosenberg Gallery and checked at Alfa Diallo’s space.

Sandro, following the David Ecker’s model the artist/researcher, started to create a series of logobooks made by images and texts related to his phenomenological experience, made “in the first person” as object as well as subject of his inquiry.

23s report n. ? + 34, November 6, 1994 AD,

Cagliari, 10:25 am,

Defining the coordinates of references of my Plexus journey.

“MI-DENTRO-MI-FUORI” (myself-inside-myself-outside).

This quote from an art work by Cicci Borghi recalled to me the following quote from the paper “Art and Science Today: The Role of Imagination” by David Ecker, presented in 1994: “On this experiment, we discover that neither you nor I, nor artists, scientists, psychologists, logicians--nobody-- is free to imagine, remember, depict, portray, represent, photograph, measure, or simply observe an object that is both blue and not-blue”.

It is the same for me, I cannot see myself at the same time as an insider as well as an outsider of the project under study. Therefore, scholarly, scientifically, artistically, I’ll be who I am: Plexus 23s, a lived insider of the living project “Plexus Black Box.”

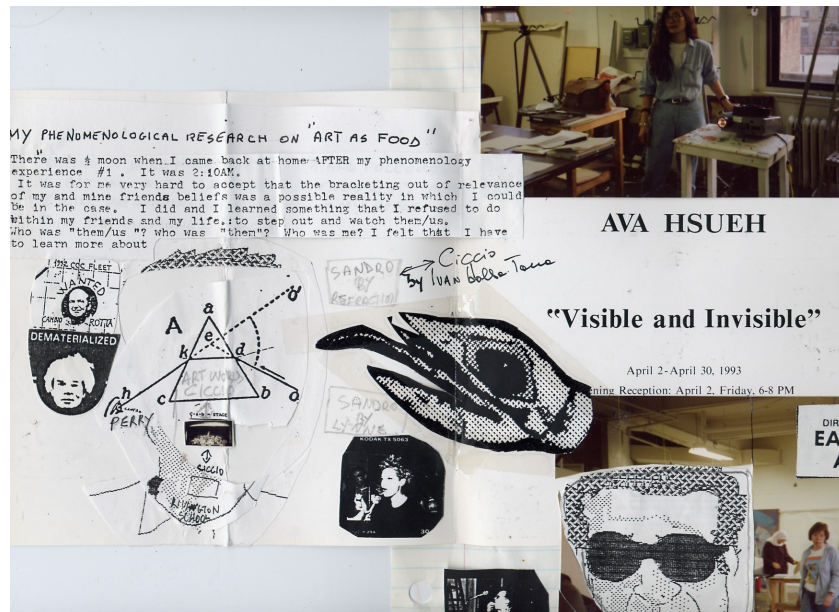
Cagliari, 10:45 am

“Eating Art” is my metaphoric concept to describe the phenomenological consciousness of myself as an artist as researcher as well as a biologist, of experiencing “art” as an oxide-reduction reaction. (Like a cold nuclear atomic reaction inside my lived body.)

11.47am.


Rodolfo (my 4 year old son) is protesting that he wants to use this pen that I am using now!

Sandro Dernini, logobook, Cagliari, 1994



His phenomenological reports allowed him to start to practice a continuous phenomenological exercise by writing notes on Plexus from his experience as a New York University student, as well as a graduate assistant of I.C.A.S.A. (International Center for Advance Studies in Arts) of New York University, and, after, of the NYU Summer Institute of Living Traditions in Art, developed in collaboration with I.S.A.L.T.A.(International Society for the Advancement of Living Traditions in Art).

Both trainings allowed him to become more familiar with current issues in art, which turned out to be very useful for his “insider” understanding of the “artworld”.

 **New York University**
A private university in the public service
School of Education
Department of Art and Art Professions

Monday, May 2, 1994, 6:00 PM
ALL STUDENTS AND FACULTY
WELCOME
PRESENTATION

The 1994 Graduate Summer
Institute of
Living Traditions in Art:
The Lower East Side

A Community-Based Project

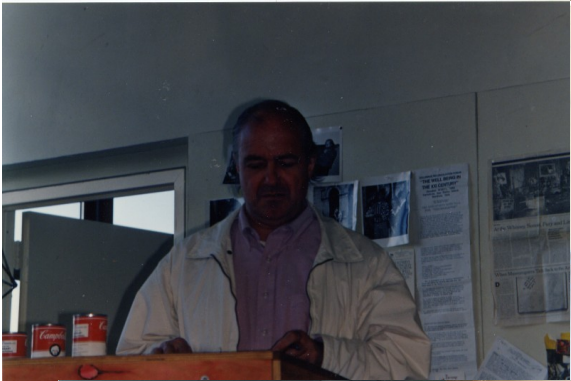
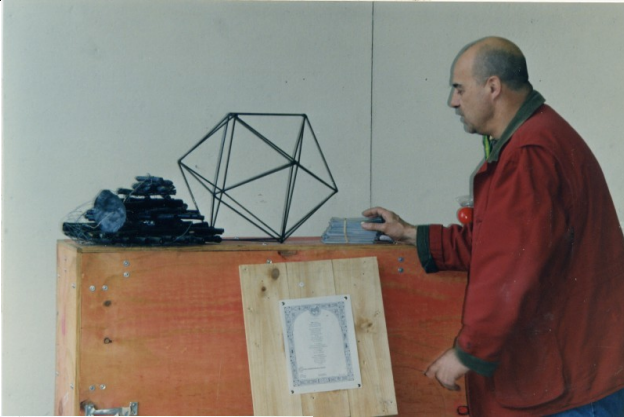
This meeting will serve to provide a better understanding of the purpose of the institute, June 13th - June 30th, and to plan a calendar of art events and exhibitions, round-tables and lectures, and Lower East Side field trips and meetings with artists and intellectuals from the Community.

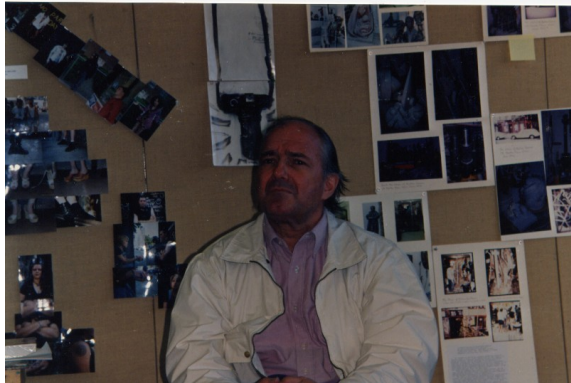
"The Living Plexus Black Box of the Voyage of the Elisabeth", a travelling installation built upon the documentation of the 1993 Graduate Summer Institute, will be presented by Prof. John Torreano.
The project will be on exhibition at the University of Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy, June 6-12.

Critique Room, 6th Floor, Barney Building

At NYU Barney building, as part of the Summer Institute, it was organized with David Ecker, John Torreano, Gerry Snaider, and Catleen... a deconstruction presentation of the opening of Plexus Black Boxes from Alfa Diallo's House of the Originals. It was made to show all records and relics in order to understand how to managed it as a travelling art exhibition to be carried in Sardinia, in Cagliari, in June for an event Art & Science Today, organized by the University of Cagliari, on the occasion of the 10 years of life of Plexus International, where David Ecker was invited and Leonard

Lehrer, chairman of the Art and Art Professions Department, had agreed to give a small budget for it.







Following all these NYU Summer Institute meetings with David Ecker in the community of the Lower East Side Sandro Dernini continued his phenomenological notes and logbooks that helped him to keep an attentive consciousness upon learning how to describe not only what was appearing in his experience but also how it was appearing to himself.



He was conscious that to do it and to describe his Plexus ongoing-living-experience as it was/is lived was a hard task, something which at the same time changed his earlier perceptions and provided him with new outside and inside views.





Ecker in "The Possibility of a Multicultural Art Education" described this kind of change of perception: *What I have learned is that placing oneself in an artistic center of another culture inevitably changes not only one's earlier perceptions of that culture and its arts but also provides a new "outside" view of one's own culture, art, and art education.* (18)

By turning his experience into a narrative discourse, Sandro Dernini followed and modified in part the field procedural steps described by Edward M. Bruner in Ethnography as Narrative:

First we tell the people why we are there, what information we are seeking, and how we intend to use the data. We do this directly, by explaining our project and by our behaviour, by the questions we ask and the activities we attend. As the people respond to our questions, we begin the ethnographic dialogue, the complex interactions and exchanges that lead to the negotiation of the text. In the second telling we take this verbal and visual information and process it, committing it to writing in our field diaries. This transcription is not easy. There is necessarily a dramatic reduction, condensation and fragmentation of data. In the third telling the audience consists of our colleagues, who provide feedback as we prepare our materials for publication and here the story becomes even more prominent. There is, of course, a fourth telling-when other anthropologists read what we have written and summarise it in class lectures and in their own publication. (147 -148)

Sandro Dernini modified the 3rd etic telling step of Bruner by inserting first the emic move of bringing back to the sources the data collected from them, in this case to the community of Plexus participants, to be emically validated by their verification. Only after he accomplished this emic step he felt sure to move forward, following Bruner's etic step to bring the data to the scientific community. Bruner also acknowledged narrative ethnographies as coauthored works between the anthropologist and his informants.

