

## PROJECT 2000- East European Sector Preliminary Proposal

During over five years of travel, performance and research in Eastern Europe I have repeatedly observed coincidental yet spontaneously generated interests and activities involving the analysis, collection and aesthetic manipulation of local, amateur, or "non-professional" cultural artifacts. These efforts correspond directly to my own creative work and concerns stimulated by my personal ethnic background. While using English as an "interface" language in contacting young artists and intellectuals within the East European Countries, I have imagined the possibility of integrating these activities through newly available technology. There is a consistency in approach represented in these collections, which, while aesthetic and creative rather than scientific, contain authentic factual data which lend themselves to be interfaced, stored and processed by digital technologies. My interest is in the "amateur" representation of private or "micro-history" (the history of the non-protagonists) which is marginal rather than decisive: an illegitimate rather than a professional or expert interpretation. Since the advent of photographic media, the possibility of personal "unmediated" image statements have existed yet the mountain of amateur snapshots and home movies are rapidly being discarded. Corresponding biographical material lies forgotten in institutional archives and personal collections. I therefore propose a project to be centered in Budapest, Hungary which might be considered as a "pilot" to a later global initiative, from which at the vantage point of the turning of the century in the year 2000, we might look back on the twentieth century. Such work has already begun in Budapest, currently a focal point for east-west exchange in Eastern Europe, an area that has experienced a long period of cultural isolation. Material lies raw and uncollected, waiting interpretation. The prime sources are local yet the model is universal. In the process local material is brought to the attention of world culture.

I am interested primarily in the living creative interpretation of the materials and the realization of individual creative and artistic projects. While the methods of collection and storage represent a pseudo-scientific approach, the project

focuses on the reconstruction and reinterpretation of the essence of the materials which is biased towards a personal aesthetic vision of the past, present and future. The principals are therefore practicing artists, who must continually redefine their positions within cultural, economic, and political contexts. . Yet there are surely multiple offshoots which will yield practical results- such as the introduction of advanced computer technology into Eastern Europe and the creation of an Image/Audio/Text data base archive which might be distributed to libraries and made accessible to scholars, students and other artists. Pictorial and data collection is now a developed technology which is used in science and government, yet it has not been pioneered in the collecting and interpretation of cultural artifacts because of logistical complications. My generation currently faces an unparalleled dilemma- the immanent disappearance of traditional and private culture. We have grown up without a past, and therefore, have no present and no future.

Arnold Dreyblatt

## SOURCES

The project will base its initial work on integrating two collections already established in Budapest and interfacing them with electronic and digital media. In the second stage contacts will be initiated with artists, and collectors throughout East Europe who can exchange materials with the "home base" in Budapest. The third stage involves creative projects utilizing materials from the archive by participating artists resulting in experimental work in interdisciplinary audio/visual performance arts as well as the establishment of the permanent archive. The following two archives have agreed to cooperate:

### 1. Horus Archive, Budapest

The Horus Archive was founded by Kardos Sandor, one of the leading cinematographers of Hungary. He has collected over 200,000 amateur non-professional photographs dating from the early years of photography. The collection is categorized according to behavioral, social and aesthetic archetypes. Kardos has received a grant from the Sörös Foundation in New York to begin entering the material into an IBM computer system. Photographs from the collection have been exhibited in western and eastern Europe.

Kardos Sandor was born in Budapest in 1944, where he studied Hungarian literature and ethnography at the University. He then completed the cinematography program at the Academy for Theater and Film Art in Budapest. Kardos has won numerous prizes for his cinematography work in such noted Hungarian films such as "The Little Valentino" and "The Annunciation" by Jeleš András and "The Disciples" by Geza Bereményi. He has also served as director and cameraman to dozens of educational and documentary films for television. He has edited the book, "Leletek- Findings from the History of Hungarian Photography" with Szilágyi Gábor (Kép. Al. Kiadó, Budapest, 1983) in which many photographs from his collection were included. Selections from the archive were also published in "Fotográfózásról"- "On Taking Photos" (Muzsák, Budapest, 1984). A monograph on the collection will soon be published by "Het Apollohuis" in the Netherlands.