

Arturo Lindsay

a Biographical Sketch

Arturo Lindsay is an artist/scholar/educator whose work is informed by the scholarly research he conducts on African spiritual and aesthetic retentions, rediscoveries and re-inventions in America. His research findings are manifested in works of art, as well as books, scholarly essays and lectures. A proud native of Colon, a seaport city on the Caribbean coast of the Republic of Panama, Lindsay migrated to the United States with his family at age 12 and settled in Brooklyn, New York.

Lindsay began his career as a theater artist acting and directing in *avant-garde* street theater productions in New York City and New England. Shortly after completing his undergraduate degree at Central Connecticut State College, Lindsay worked in regional productions in New England prior to attending graduate school. During this period of his life he became a self-taught Expressionist artist painting very troubling images of the racial and economic injustices he saw unfolding on the streets of New York. The strength of this body of work gained him admission into graduate school at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst where he studied with Afri-Cobra member Nelson Stevens; Colombian artist Leonel Góngora, a founding member of Nueva Presencia and Salon Independiente in Mexico; and Nana Dr. Kobina Nketsia, Kwame Nkrumah's first Minister of Art and Culture in Ghana. At UMass, Amherst Lindsay met his mentor, the anthropologist Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, now director of the National Museum of African Art in Washington, DC.

Amherst, Massachusetts during the 1980s was a hotbed of socio-political activity and a cultural incubator for young intellectuals and artists determined to bring positive change to the world. Organizations and institutions such as the Third World Alliance, the Venceremos Brigade and The Institute for Pan-African Research provided Lindsay access to artists, intellectuals and educators such as political scientist Acklyn Lynch, Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, playwright/director/filmmaker Paul Carter Harrison, dancer/choreographer Diana Ramos, author Julius Lester and jazz musicians Max Roach and Archie Shepp. After graduation Lindsay lived in Hartford, Connecticut where he worked at the Artist Collective with jazz musician Jackie McLean and Roger Furman, the founding director of the New Heritage Repertory Theater in Harlem. While in Hartford, Lindsay also pursued an arts administration internship with the Connecticut Commission on the Arts and later dedicated himself to working with the youth of Hartford painting murals.

In the mid 1980s under the direction of Sandro Dernini, a cohort at NYU, Lindsay and fellow artists, poets and musicians Lorenzo Pace, Butch Morris, David Boyle, Lynne Kanter, Maggie Riley and Alpha Dialo founded Plexus International. This multinational group of artists began creating large-scale collaborative art projects known as co-operas during the 1980s in New York City's Lower East Side. Lindsay continues creating

Plexus based Internet art projects in Rome, Dakar, Atlanta, Sardinia, Sydney and Portobelo, Panama.

In 1993 Lindsay returned to Panama where he co-founded the Painting Workshop of *Taller Portobelo* with photographer Sandra Eleta and Yaneca Esquina, a leading member of the Congos of Portobelo. *Taller Portobelo* is an artist cooperative dedicated to preserving the traditions of the Congos who are descendants of *cimarrones* – enslaved Africans that liberated themselves in wars fought against the Spanish empire. He later founded and for 15 years directed the Spelman College Summer Art Colony that provided students and emerging artists from the United States and Panama an opportunity to create new and innovative works of art in the rainforest of Portobelo.

In 2012 Lindsay was named one of 15 artists selected nationwide to participate in *smARTpower*, an initiative of the Department of State and administered by the Bronx Museum of the Arts. This initiative builds on Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's vision of "smart power diplomacy." Lindsay was assigned to Cairo, Egypt.

Dr. Arturo Lindsay is Professor Emeritus and former Chair of the Department of Art and Art History at Spelman College in Atlanta. He holds a Doctor of Arts (D.A.) degree from New York University (1990). His dissertation title is *Performance Art Ritual as Postmodern Thought, an Aesthetic Investigation*. Lindsay also holds a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree in Painting from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (1975) and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from Central Connecticut State College (1970.) He was the 2006 Distinguished Batza Family Chair at Colgate University and in 2005 he was named the Kemp Distinguished Visiting Professor at Davidson College in Davidson, NC. In 1999 Lindsay served as a Fulbright Senior Scholar at the University of Panama.