

## ALA PLASTICA (Rio De La Plata, Argentina)

Ala Plastica is an arts and environmental organization based in Argentina that develops projects that can be described as public art or interventionist art. The main concern is to link the artist's way of thinking and working with the development of projects in the social and environmental realm. Since 1991 Ala Plastica has developed a range of non-conventional artworks, focused on local and regional problems, and in close contact and collaboration with other artists, scientists and environmental groups. Ala Plastica works bio-regionally, within the nation of Argentina, as well as internationally in relationship to other transformative arts practitioners. The members of Ala Plastica are Silvina Babich, Alejandro Meitin, and Rafael Santos



### **A bioregional perspective: the place vocation.**

Communities are identified with systems that are environmentally recognizable through a comprehensive totality definable as what we term the “place vocation.” This integration of the place symbolic role of place and the form built in the natural landscape has been represented by art in most cultures. Advanced research on immunodeficiency recognizes that the human body is connected to the environment by means of a neuro-chemical communication network that determines our health and well being to a great extent. In order to be connected with the environment, it is not necessary to develop a sense of sentimentality or mysticism, not even a vital and intense sense of connection with nature. It is simply necessary to understand the place vocation and to recognize that the environment –its cultural and natural manifestations- is only an extension of who we are.



The challenge lies in how to articulate the force of an engaged art practice in order to catalyze the regenerative possibilities of the community through doing. Two basic elements for the regeneration of a bioregional system are communication and the recovery of the social power of doing.

### **Project: Exercise of Displacement: Rio Santiago**

Ala Plastica, together with the Austrian group Cartografia, has begun to develop a participatory design process for the territory or Rio Santiago based upon the remnant elements of indigenous nature and culture. The Río Santiago basin has specific characteristics and form such as unemployment indexes above 30 percent, very high level of contamination from industrial effluent and an increasing impact on the land and air by transportation systems. The challenge is to create a collective civic plan based on a harmonic comprehension of the ecosystem and the infrastructure. The plan as it is being developed will include cultural values, landscape, recreational convenience, bio-diversity corridors and the participation of social actors in the use of public land.