

RYAN BREWER

THE RENEWAL OF HUMAN NATURE: SHAMANISM IN THE MODERN ERA

I am an interdisciplinary artist working to investigate the transitory state of the human spirit in the 21st century. I synthesize ancient and futuristic spiritual mythologies in an effort to encode the aesthetics of form and movement with transformative ideologies of human identity.

My work is visionary in nature—my inner experiences manifest visual transmissions (and consequent material expressions) of the spirit in a state of perpetual metamorphosis. This naturally emerging phenomenon sheds light on the intrinsic role that belief plays in the formation and comprehension of spiritual identities. To this end, I am interested in how subjective excavations of the subconscious are capable of sculpting social realities.

My current work is inspired and informed by a myriad of shamanic lineages, most notably ancient tantric practices within Buddhist and Hindu disciplines along with the gender-defying mediation of Native American two-spirited peoples. These inspirations coalesce with visual mythologies of contemporary science fiction, theoretical cosmologies of quantum physics and parallel alignments with neo-pagan movements toward a rediscovery of the human's role and place within nature.

I am working toward a total reexamination—and consequent reinvention—of my own nature in an effort to synchronize the spirit to its embodied reality. Through transfigurations of embodiment I seek transformations of consciousness. This ideology crystallizes the social intentions and philosophical underpinnings of my work. My personal practice manifests through visceral yet ethereal performance rituals within symbolically encoded environments consisting of performative sculpture and multimedia production.

Within the performative aspects of my work, I aim to liquefy seemingly concrete archetypes of identity. My ritualized yet intuitive process oscillates between action and meditation that seek to mirror and thus unify the dualistic divine—from masculine to feminine, horrific to ecstatic, brutal to celestial and beyond. I embody my meditative practice through mind/bodywork in aerial arts, yogic dance improvisation and energy visualization techniques.

The mediated environments I create result in both aesthetic and functional ambiguity. I engage complex combinations of media (light, sound, video, scent, costume, cosmetics, herbal alchemy and kinetic apparatuses) to encode multimedia installation with what I view as a mundane yet sacred aesthetic. Through aesthetic hybridizations of the natural and the mechanical, the ancient and the futuristic, the utopian and the post-apocalyptic, I reflect ambiguous landscapes of the subconscious for the purpose of personal and social synthesis.

I design and subsequently activate sculptural apparatuses in an effort to simultaneously glorify and subvert modes of modernity and mythology; spirituality and sexuality. Through the reinvention and ritualization of the machine and the human's relationship to it, these newfound interactions incite the most crucial component of my investigation: the interpersonal discoveries of spiritual interconnectivity. Through the activation of the meditative mechanism, I hope to spiritualize and thus re-humanize a post-industrial environment that has fallen victim to its own dehumanizing tendencies.

My work is principally informed by these beliefs. I seek to bridge the separation between personal and social space to create collective moments of subliminal intimacy. By placing my work in public contexts—physical and digital alike—I invite viewers to experience my meditative process in action. This invitation may inspire or challenge viewers to examine their own beliefs and to reconcile the differences in between.

Through the shared experience of my work, I hope to unite the personal processes of art-making with the social processes of its reception, aspiring for the total cohesion of art, artist and audience—toward a state of Oneness. This is my hope for the evolution of the human perceptual experience.

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