

NATIVE STRATEGIES

Winter 2012



- Cynthia Carr
- Samara Golden
- Liz Glynn
- Samuel White
- Amanda Yates
- Rafa Esparza
- Alexa Weir
- Jane Brucker
- Tanya Rubbak
- Signify, Sanctify, Believe

Rituals
& CONGREGATIONS

In the winter of 1999, in Johnson, Vermont, I spent the remainder of my artist's residency recovering from the flu and reading the David Wojnarowicz memoir *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration*¹ while a snowstorm raged for a third day outside my bedroom window. In it David detailed his existence as a young hustler in Times Square, his growth as an artist, his entanglements with the Christian Right, and the AIDS epidemic that swept through his world, killing off it seemed, everyone he knew. I had always connected to his work for its blend of personal and classical mythology, iconography culled from the animal kingdom and depictions of man-on-man sex. What he spelled out to me, with that alphabet of recurring symbols and images, was that AIDS was useful to our government in eliminating the voices of artists I would otherwise have met and studied under. My generation of gay artists should have had the guidance and wisdom of people like David. 13 years later my best friend gave me *Fire in the Belly: The Life and Times of David Wojnarowicz*² by Cynthia Carr. It's a 600-plus page voyage through David's life that I read at a gallop pace, in part because the surrounding terrain of the east village in the 80's and 90's vividly reminded me of what's going on right now, here in Los Angeles. I wondered, as I read about this period of creativity and collaboration cut short by disease and capitalism, if there wasn't a warning embedded there.

An important part of this issue is investigating why, and by what means, artists hope to communicate to audiences who will survive them. Since part of Carr's manifold role in David's life was to be there with him at the end "to talk to about death," we sat down in the backyard of Johanna Went's house and had a conversation. Below is a selection of questions and answers from that talk.

Brian Getnick David's artwork seems to come from a sense of the urgent, like a kind of reaction, but also it's urgent that he communicate clearly in some ways.



Photo by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders.

¹Wojnarowicz, David. New York, Vintage Books, 1991. Print

²Carr, Cynthia. New York, Bloomsbury, 2012. Print

Cynthia Carr (C. Carr) was a columnist and arts writer for *The Village Voice* from 1984 until 2003, specializing in experimental and cutting-edge art, especially performance. She is the author of *On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Wesleyan University Press, 1993), *Our Town: A Heartland Lynching, A Haunted Town, and the Hidden History of White America* (Crown, 2006), and most recently, *Fire in the Belly: The Life and Times of David Wojnarowicz* (Bloomsbury, 2012). She was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2007.

C. Carr Even before anyone knew what AIDS was there are parts of his journal where he talks about how he feels the pressure of time passing, and that he is getting old. Even in his 20s he writes that "Time is passing quickly, I have to get work done." I don't know where that came from at that point but he really did feel that. Also, he worked constantly. Tom³ talked about the fact that if they went for a walk on the beach, David would be looking around for an interesting piece of driftwood. He was always thinking in that way. When they went on a vacation to Mexico, he would insist that they drive to the garbage dump, so he could take pictures. So at the end, the last trip to Mexico, there's this moment where David is lying in a hammock with his finger out in the sand on the beach and Tom says to Anita, their good friend who'd come along, he said "Look, he is not working." (laughs) They'd never seen that before. He was actually just lying in a hammock. It was so unusual.

bg It was towards the end?

cc Towards the end, yeah. I think it was the last trip to Mexico.

bg One thing I'm interested in, in the context of this issue we're producing on rituals and congregations, is artwork that's made for non-present audiences. I wonder about who David's internal audiences were for his work. People that were going to make it to see his shows, people from the past – maybe antecedents that he was answering back to through art and performative gestures – but also given his growing awareness of his *actual* mortality and watching people die around him, the people he would *not* meet.

cc Well, his work was done for Peter – Peter Hujar.⁴ He even stated that to me: "Everything I made, I made for Peter." After Peter died, I think that's why he went into this big depression and stopped working for a while. He made those four elements paintings while Peter was still alive.

bg Water is so good.

cc I love Water. Water and Wind are my favorites, actually. Peter came to the opening, even though it was a couple of months before he died, and he was very sick, and had trouble getting back up the stairs to his loft and all. But I think

he wouldn't have missed that for anything. So Peter saw that work. After Peter was dead, I think there was a more general audience, maybe a gay audience, or maybe people he wanted to speak to who he knew, I'm not sure. Someone at LACE challenged me about my saying in the introduction that David didn't mean his work to be a provocation. It was more him speaking his truth. They said, "How can you say it wasn't provocation?" And I really don't think it was. I don't think he set out to, say, write that essay for the Witnesses show with the idea that this would get a rise out of Jesse Helms. I don't think he ever expected someone like Jesse Helms to be an audience for him. He was speaking to people who were going through the same experiences he was: other people with AIDS or whatever. But I don't know that he'd even thought about it in that narrow way. I think it was, at that point, just a way to get his message out for whoever might be open to it.

bg I wonder if the positive reception of his show *Tongues of Flame* in Normal, Illinois caused him to reconsider who his audience could be. Suddenly, amid all the controversy he is embraced.

cc Well, actually it even started with the show called *In the Shadow of Forward Motion*. In one of his taped journal entries, he was talking about that. He did a tremendous amount of work for that show. He thought it might be his last show and he did this journal entry where he said maybe he should just kill himself. He was feeling crummy... he goes into this whole fantasy of vomiting: "maybe I'll vomit everything out into the street" and on and on about how "I'm putting this work out and the art world will probably hate it, and who cares about them?" And then, the show went up and the reviews were rapturous, everyone was taking him seriously, in some cases for the first time. He got important pieces in *Artforum* and *Art in America*, people reacting to his work. *That* – I can even tell in the journal writing – that threw him. All of a sudden he was being regarded as an important artist and I think he never thought he was before. And then, yes, I think being embraced in Normal was

very important to him too. And I love that for the reasons I stated at LACE. I think that people like Helms who complained that average Americans hate his kind of art are very condescending. I was there in Cincinnati when they shut down the museum for the Mapplethorpe show.⁵ I literally was there when the first person walked in, and it was this middle-American, middle-aged guy in a windbreaker – not a hipster at all. He was the first one in line, so that meant he had to get there really early and I knew he thought he had to be there early because the Sheriff would close the place down and he wouldn't get in otherwise. And I asked him, "Why did you do this, make the effort to get in here?" He said, "I wanted to make up my own mind."

bg *Fire in the Belly* was a five-year project. What has gone through in your mind as you've been writing this? What's the importance of this book?

cc I feel that David is a really important artist, particularly for young gay men. Right after David died – I was in Los Angeles when he died, I got the phone call and right after that, I was about to leave and I was on my way, I was going to visit a friend in Boulder, Colorado and I told her how upsetting it was to me that David had died. She said, "Oh maybe you should talk about him at our local art center." I did talk about him in Boulder, and I started by putting a slide of *One Day This Kid...*⁶ which I had there on the screen for people to see when they came in. My thinking then – this was in 1992 – was people outside the art world may not know about him and he is important especially for young gay men to know about.

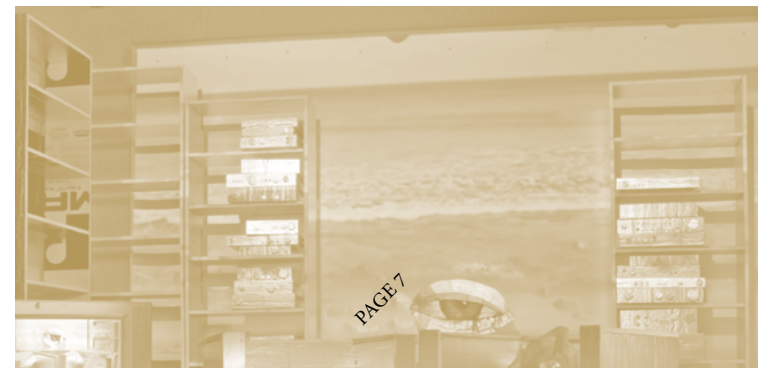
bg Do you feel like you're a part of an extension of David's project?

cc I hope I am.

bg You feel like he is working through you?

cc Well, that would be sort of a mystical point of view (laughs), but maybe. I think that he is someone people should know about and hopefully be inspired by. I think it really can appeal to people outside the art world and I hope it will. When I started the project... I knew that David would

have some kind of compelling story. I wasn't sure what to believe when his friends would talk about the mythology. They didn't know either. No one had done research, or no one had talked to his sister and brother. It's just, those stories, oh my god, can that really be true? So there was that about him personally. There was also the East Village scene, which I had lived through myself and I wasn't writing about the galleries, I was writing about the clubs and the performances, like Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, people like that who were performing. And then there was the AIDS crisis, which I had done some writing about and lived through with people – like I describe, every morning going first to the obituaries to see who was gone now, all these amazing people leaving – and then the culture war, which I wrote about quite a bit, starting with David. I feel very emotionally attached to him. At the end of his life, he let me in – I felt actually very privileged to be one of those people. Someone the other night after the presentation at LACE asked me, "Why do you think he let you be there?" My own feeling at the time was that with me, he wanted to be able to talk to someone about death. He picked me as the person to talk to about death. Not that I'm an expert, but I can talk about it, I'm not afraid to talk about it.





Rape of the Mirror: Beachside installation, 2011.
Mixed media and live video, installation view at Night Gallery.
Los Angeles, 2011, photo by Max Schwartz.

Samara Golden received a MFA from Columbia University, New York in 2009. She has exhibited her work in the US and abroad including Solo projects at Frieze, New York; Night Gallery, Los Angeles; WorkSpace, Los Angeles; and Ferenbalm-Gurbrü Station, Karlsruhe, Germany. Her work has been included in exhibitions at Sculpture Center, New York; Renwick, New York; Derek Eller, New York; CANADA, New York; ARTISSIMA, Turin, Italy; Galerie Michael Janssen, Berlin; ACME, Los Angeles; and LAXART, Los Angeles. Golden's work has been written about in *Mousse Magazine*, *Art in America*, *NY Magazine*, *Flash Art*, *The LA weekly*, *Rhizome*, *Art Forum*, and the *New York Times*. Golden is currently based out of east Los Angeles.

Brian Getnick Do you ever make work for audiences that are absent?

Samara Golden Yes. My work is really intuitive and personal, I made the installation *BAD BRAINS* for a specific person that I knew when I was 14 years old. His name was Alex, he was 17, and he killed himself. It happened almost 24 years ago. *BAD BRAINS* was talking to the suffering souls. It was a way of reconciling with a certain kind of powerlessness, a perceived unfairness, and my feelings of sorrow for the people I've known, that for whatever reason, didn't get to grow old. The installation was made for the *Frieze* fair last year on Randall's island in New York. Initially I started by learning about the people who had inhabited the island, from the Na-

tive American tribes, to the massive “potters grave” in the 1800’s (a grave for unclaimed / unnamed bodies), to the people that were locked in the monolithic insane asylum there. I was trying to connect to other times, I even had a vision of a woman named Anne who wore a yellow cotton dress and who was a nurse in one of the early asylums. But soon realized that the only way for my work to have real meaning to me, was to connect to the people I’ve known that have passed away, and hence I started thinking of Alex. Since that installation was made two of my friends have died, and I sort of think of them as being the audience for the piece too. Also while researching I found out that someone commits suicide every 17 minutes in the US, its very sad, in some way the masks in the piece were made to give a face to those people. The sad thing is that I could make those masks forever and there would always be more to make.

bg Do you want your work to be transmitted to audiences existing beyond the lifespan of your body?

sg Intellectually I’m inspired by the idea of time travel. I hope that my work can be a door, a door that opens to other times, future and past. The audience of now may be able to see the door, but perhaps we don’t know how to walk through its threshold...yet. I like the idea of making things for the people of the future, especially on days when I can’t understand the inhumanity of the state of the world (and when I feel like I don’t want to be part of it). On a more very concrete note, there are a lot of absent audiences — The art world is small and made up of people who are fairly similar, the art world wants to be elite, or to commingle with the elite, to engage in a capitalist dream. I find more satisfaction when someone who is not really in the art world feels a connection to my work, maybe its an 80 yr old woman, a poet, musician, or a teenager. Most people are intelligent and creative in what they do, I’m sort of more interested in what they think, than I am in the trendiness of the art world. I hope to describe something outside of

art, with art...its like putting air in a bottle in an attempt to capture a cloud...its the problem of making the immaterial into material.

bg Do you find the gallery to be a spiritual place?

sg No. I think ‘art work’ can be a spiritual place, but the gallery is inherently not. Galleries are like hotels for art, never a home. The studio can be a spiritual place, I think the idea of the gallery is outdated, its about commerce, so much artwork is made about commerce these days, and its all talking to the gallery, I think art should talk to everybody except the gallery. I would rather make something that one person can feel something from, than engage in the language of commerce. Maybe in the future there will be no such thing as a gallery, we will all make our work in our studios or on site and people will come to see it wherever it is, it will be part of everyones lives, not just the elite. In a way, my form of spirituality is creativity.

bg In past work I have seen of yours, the installation encompasses the entire space of the gallery. Is this expressing a desire for another kind of place, other than the gallery to stage your ideas?

sg Yes, I would rather make things in my house, other peoples houses, or in their swimming pools, or better yet, in a mountain stream, on a tropical beach, or in a birch forest.





Liz Glynn, *///*, 2010. Performance highlight. Produced by Redling Fine Art, Los Angeles.
Photo courtesy of the artist and Redling Fine Art, Los Angeles.

Liz Glynn

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PAGE 12

Rituals
& CONGREGATIONS

WINTER 2012

Liz Glynn creates sculpture, large-scale installations, and participatory performances using epic historical narratives to explore the potential for change. Her practice seeks to embody dynamic cycles of growth, possibility, and decay by evidencing process, encouraging participation, and inciting future action. Recent projects include her solo show *HOARD* at Redling Fine Art; *///*, an off-site installation produced by Redling Fine Art; *Utopia or Oblivion*, for Performa 11, New York; *loving you is like fucking the dead*, at MOCA, Los Angeles; and *black box* produced by LA><ART and the Getty Research Institute as part of the Pacific Standard Time Festival. Her work has also been presented at The New Museum (NYC), LACMA (Los Angeles), the Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), Paula Cooper Gallery (NYC), Southern Exposure (San Francisco), and Arthouse at the Jones Center (Austin). Reviews of her projects have appeared in *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *the Los Angeles Times*, *Art Lies*, *Domus*, *Archaeology Magazine*, *Frieze*, and *Artforum*.

PAGE 13

Brian Getnick I remember the performance you did at MOCA where we were allowed to search in the wreckage of a burnt-out structure¹. It wasn't the original structure or the event that destroyed it but the debris in the aftermath that mattered. There is something anti-archival about that, almost anti-museum in a way, given the assumption that the museum's job is to preserve an object from events happening to it.

Liz Glynn The thing I'm so interested in with museums is that notion of protection and how it is completely constructed. For example, the Getty Villa acquired their classical sculpture after the market had been firmly established, which made it quite expensive. Also, in 1970, UNESCO had placed a ban on the exporting of cultural antiquities. So a lot of the pottery they had was broken into three hundred shards by the people who dug them up just to get them out of the country. They would sell these pots, shard by shard to be reassembled later. So a lot of these objects, which look like they've been around forever were actually painstakingly put back together piece by piece. The acquisition was of the fragments not the object.

bg What about this fallacy of timelessness is important to your work?

lg Institutions try to make claims about certain cultural values inherent in objects and there is this implicit assumption that that value remains true over time. That presumption of future importance is why, rather than looking at these things as the fragile imperfect creations of humans, they are seen as perfect examples or platonic ideals. It's almost a condition of the practice of art history to separate the object from the maker and from the actual narrative of its conception and production.

bg How do these conditions affect the way museums handle performances?

lg The museum is particularly concerned with ideas around excellence and cleanliness and performances are often dirty and awkward. If you remove those elements you also remove the ground on which the performance sits. Museums want the energy of performance art without

understanding that that energy comes from the messiness. When they say "we want only the best of it" they miss that failure and awkwardness are so important to the performance even happening.

bg Talk to me about *Spirit Resurrection*.²

lg The project came out of looking at the archives at LACE of the original *High Performance*³ catalog for *Public Spirit*, the first performance art festival that happened in LA in 1980. It was all organized by artists. Barbara T. Smith, John Duncan, Chip Chapman, and Paul McCarthy to name a few. They organized it through letters stating: *We're so excited you're doing this, we don't have a lot of money but you can charge 3 bucks for beer at the door if you need.* And this felt so familiar to what we're doing in LA now. There is a tendency to look back at performances from that time as very rarified but they were all working in this fast and loose and anti-precious way that didn't feel like about the need to make historic work. It was the opposite impulse. It was *Let's get together and do this*. A lot of times when artists are invited to present their practices institutionally they get cleaned up in a way that takes out a lot of what's exciting.

bg What do you make of Mike Kelley's death?

lg The thing I think about is what a broad emotional impact it had on so many artists, even artists who didn't know him. As a younger artist you look up to someone like him and you think, *You're Mike Kelley, you're infallible, you got to this level where even a bad Mike Kelley show is still brilliant.* From the outside it seems like even though there might be stress associated with being famous, there should be the satisfaction of knowing "you've made it" that buffers against it. In fact, the way that institutions want better and bigger work from artists at a certain level of success is insatiable and inhuman. All artists feel like they can fail. We might not have another idea for a long time and we have to deal with that and our own physical fatigue. It's important

in thinking about him being a canonized figure vs. him being a human.

bg Mike Kelley was alive when *Spirit Resurrection* was happening and I thought, why are we resurrecting people who are still alive?

lg So much of the Getty and PST⁴ conversation emphasized reenactment but the artists I worked with were actually more interested in making new performances than recreating stuff. I feel that we've exhausted that ritual of recreating performance. Actually, at *Spirit Resurrection*, the only artists that wanted to see their performances recreated to the letter were the artists whose pieces had not been canonized.

bg Why was that?

lg I think they just wanted to see that their work still exists.



Liz Glynn, *III*, 2010. Performance highlight. Produced by Redling Fine Art, Los Angeles. Photo courtesy of the artist and Redling Fine Art, Los Angeles.



Liz Glynn, *Loving You is Like Fucking the Dead: Like A Patient Etherized Upon A Table (MOCA Goes Dark)*, 2011. Performance highlight. Engagement Party, MOCA, Los Angeles.



Liz Glynn and Dawn Kasper performance at **black box**, 2012. Photo courtesy of LAXART and the Getty Research Institute; photo credit Calvin Lee.



We Should Be You: A Study for Physical Interpretation (Simon).
Photo by Andrew Tonkery, 2011.

Samuel White

Samuel White's performance work confronts the self through doubling and a need for meaningful, interpersonal relationships with audiences. This desire is evident in revealing performances in which the artist explores uninhibited sexuality, psychological confrontation, and sincere self-doubt. White's recent series, *Study of Repetition to Achieve the New Now*, investigates fantasy, sexual identity, and the absurdities of routine through scripted and participatory environments and actions such as wrestling circles and cruising bathrooms within the gallery space. White has exhibited performance works and film projects at Human Resources, Los Angeles (2011), LACE, Los Angeles (2011, 2010), and Zico House, Beirut (2011), among others. Follow his work at facebook.com/pages/Samuel-White/218493464871901

SAMUEL WHITE INTERVIEWED BY CAROL CHEH

Carol Cheh Why did you adopt the name "Samuel White?"

Samuel White I used to perform as part of a duo called *Alex Black and Samuel White*, so it was an early stage name of mine. We did a series of musical plays and released two experimental albums for the zine project *Groupwork LA*, and it has stuck ever since.

cc What do you think of the word "white" erasing racial identity?

sw I've thought of that and I think it erases more than just race. When you think of white it's such an empty palette—a bright void of sorts. Which I like since I'm interested in intimacy and present myself as a stranger in many instances.

cc Maybe it would be helpful if we provide a brief, simple description of your performances to date, and then have you do a kind of debriefing of each of them.

sw My initial performance was in 2009. Titled *Study of Repetition to Achieve the New Now Part #1*, it struggled with my interest in attempting to be as present as possible through the use of repetitive motions. It consisted of a series of repetitive tasks such as snapping Polaroids of small porcelain figures, taking Polaroids of those Polaroids, then smashing one of the figures, then attaching the photo to a large black curtain that hung across the room. I would then read from a script on the essence of being in the moment and how the artist should attempt to achieve this through performance. I was also removing tons of bobby pins from my hair. All these actions were repeated over and over again, accompanied by drone music and a crashing sound that steadily became louder. It concluded when the script was finished, the pins were out, there was no more film, and the figures were all smashed.

This initial performance then became a series where I eventually created Part #2, Part #3, and Part #4. They all had to do with repetitive motions as a means to achieve a present and spiritual connection, not unlike the whirling

dervishes. For me, repetition serves as a gateway to the magic of being. The latest part was the wrestling piece at LACE, in which a partner kept wrestling me down to the ground while I read some psychology texts about the concept of the double—again, an attempt to reach a heightened state of emotional awareness through a repetitive movement.

The next body of work was titled *We Should Be You* and had a different subtitle for each piece. All were performed in 2011. *WSBY a study for physical interpretation - simon* was a series of photographs in which I created a representation of people who called me from Bard College and answered three general questions. I then sent the photographs to be displayed at the college. *WSBY a study of physical markings - simon* happened in Beirut and consisted of allowing the public to write any phrase of their choosing onto an overhead projector that was then tattooed live onto my back. The third part of this series was *WSBY a study for physical movement - simon* and is the last public performance that I've done to date. This one completely wore me down physically, as the previous one did psychologically. I rode a mechanical bull for three hours at the direction and control of the spectators while reading a series of texts.

The common thread I'm trying to explore with all my pieces is the nature of intimacy. This is what we as humans desire and yet can be most scared of. There are other pieces that do not fall into the above series but follow a similar trend. There was the *text-me-your-fantasy-date* piece where participants texted me their dream date and picked a date and time to realize it. Or the yet-to-be realized *24 artworks 24 performances* where I interweave the biographies of artworks from MOCA's permanent collection with those of the participants. Or the bathroom cruising work at LACE, in which I hired people to cruise audience members at a performance event. These all

work to stage a situation where intimacy will arise.

cc Ritual is most definitely present in your work. And yet, your work strives against what is typically conjured by the notion of ritual, which is formality and distance. Your work struggles toward intimacy, rawness and close encounters. And yet, it uses the framework of ritual to get there. I'm thinking of the mechanical bull representing your experience of LA, and the wrestling match representing your encounters with self and other. These rituals have served to put you in visceral states. It's as though the discordance between formulaic and raw experience is what drives your enterprise. What are your thoughts on this?

sw Have you heard of Maslow's hierarchy of needs? I think it's necessary to satisfy a level of security before leading into the unknown world of intimacy and rawness. Shamans have similar approaches. Through a set of rituals and rites, they reach transcendence. I see my performative experiences similarly in that one (myself or participant) must abide by a set of initial structures in order to attain a visceral state. Therefore, I don't see my work as striving against the typical notion of ritual, but rather embracing the methods of this form to achieve a heightening state of connection, be it within the "I" or "we."

cc Does your work aspire toward transformation and if so, how and where do you envision this transformation occurring?

sw I wouldn't say my work is forwardly transformative. At least not intentionally. But I do attempt to create an experience that deeply embeds itself within the memory of the person.

sw So in this sense I suppose it could be transformative, should the person integrate the memory/experience into their being. I like to think that if someone does take away something from experiencing my pieces, that it should happen much later, after the actual event. A few days later. Like the cruising piece, which develops over a few days in the memory of the individual, or the tattoo markings that mark themselves in the participants' minds and that they go back to at random times throughout their life.

cc What role can and does chance play in your work? I'm thinking here of the cruising piece where the outcome is not as predetermined as it is in some of your other works. Does chance open up new kinds of inquiries? Does it offer some kind of escape?

sw Chance is a byproduct of every performance I do. I set the initial structure, then let the rest happen. Like the bull riding, the cruising, or the text dating, the formula is set for the participants to understand the process, but eventually the rest is up to chance and the participant's direction. So from my end, there's the chance of the other's reaction and response, but in looking at it from the side of the participant, I suppose it is not chance as their participation and willingness is a combination of their comfort and security in going along with the performance.

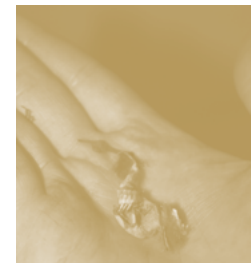
Carol Cheh is a writer and curator based in Los Angeles. She is the founder of *Another Righteous Transfer!*, a blog devoted to documenting LA's performance art scene, and currently writes for *Art Info* and the *L.A. Weekly's Style Council* blog.

<http://anotherrighteoustransfer.wordpress.com/>

It was nearly sunset and Nathan Bockelman was looking hard at a map and pouring orange sand into a labyrinth drawn around four concrete cubes. I waited with the other participants on nearby bleachers, sharing cups of tea until Amanda called us over to the long tent laid out by the edge of the dusty lot. As we lined up, she brushed us with a small broom and shook a rattle over our heads. Burning sage sent puffs of smoke up around our ankles.

For the sacrifice I had just the thing: a negative gift that had been left on my doorstep and had been sitting on my shelf for months. The gift was an assemblage of bones, sticks, and fur encased in an octagonal glass music box. At the slightest vibration it would suddenly spring to life, repeating a melancholy show tune from a musical I had never seen. I wrapped it up in several shirts and brought it to Amanda. I said: *I want to destroy this thing, it's a spiritual weapon*. She answered with a good question: Do you think you can transform it instead? I began to investigate each part: Three bags of small, oily looking "magic" sticks still in their packages. A hard furry lump, possibly a mole, with no head and little dangling claws. A slender rib bone which smelled strongly of a musky cologne.

I sewed one of the sticks to the sleeve of my shirt and gave the rest to another participant who used them to make a small fire on a letter from an ex-boyfriend. Next, I separated the body of the mole from its claws and buried it in a pile of mulch next to the tent. The claws I held in my hands as Amanda completed the ritual in Nathan's labyrinth, all of us in a circle repeating, and sometimes singing, her incantations. At the end I returned the little claws to the body in the mulch. Plunging my hand into the dirt, I discovered the mole's body to be surprisingly warm. Before I left I wound up the music box for the last time and placed it by the far edge of the lot abutting a dirty alley. The little box creaked out its last song blending with the wail of a nearby ambulance. I would have waited to hear its last chord were it not for the family of possums that suddenly scurried out of the trees. My friends and I backed away as the possums circled the now silent music box. They were hunched over it, pink eyes glaring at us in the darkening evening.





Brian Getnick at Amanda Yates' and Nathan Bockelman's
Rituals for Finding Your Way Home.
Summer Camp at Side Street Project.
Photos by Rachel Lindt and Karla Aguiniga.



Photo by Lauren Strasnick at Side Street Projects in Pasadena .

Amanda Yates

Rituals
& CONGREGATIONS

WINTER 2012

& Shifts

& Connections

AMANDA YATES is a multi-media artist and writer based in Los Angeles. Interested in both magic and artwork as means of transforming our perception of reality, she uses archaic and contemporary technologies to create shifts in how we experience space and our roles in the world. She thinks of “magic” as a worldview that implies strong connections between all things, and “ritual” as a practical way of accessing this understanding. She has conducted and collaborated in performances, happenings, and readings throughout the city of Los Angeles in venues such as the Hammer Museum, C-Level, the Experimental Meditation Center, The Echoplex, REDCAT, The Free Church, Brewery Projects, and Highways Performance Space, as well as the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, England, among others. She has been published in a variety of publications in the United States and abroad including the literary journal *Black Clock*, and *Synema Publikationen* (Austria); she was also shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize affiliated London Writer’s Competition, and *British Elle* magazine’s Jackie Moore award, as well as receiving a Kodak film grant, and an Ahmanson Foundation Scholarship.

Brian Getnick I'm interested in your practice of creating public rituals. Where do they come from and when did it begin?

Amanda Yates I've been creating and participating in rituals since childhood. My mother is pagan and my father was born again Christian. So I guess my work has been informed by those two extremes. The first rituals I did as an adult were private, done for friends at their birthdays and other events that demarcated change. The first public one was called *Happening Magic: Banishing and Welcoming* at Adam Overton's experimental mediation center on Halloween. People came to consider the things in their lives they were ready to let go of. We created effigies of them and burned them. Then, to fill that void, we created talismans for the things we wanted to welcome in.

bg I wonder about the specific populations you're attracting to these rituals, who are largely artists and who are not typically inclined to believe in something just because somebody else is telling them to.

ay Art is an institution with its own set of rituals that artists participate in. For example: you move around in a museum in circles, you hush your voice. Certain people speak, like docents, others don't speak as much, like security guards. We venerate the objects and we even make pilgrimages to see our favorite works.

bg Is your work an institutional critique? Are you exposing an art world ideology through a contrasting ritual?

ay Part of my work is definitely institutional critique. I am interested in where the authority that's vested in the major players of the art world comes from. Or for that matter, where the authority in anyone or anything comes from, really. I'm also very interested in how we deem certain ideas about meaning rational and appropriate, and others, those related to certain forms of spirituality say, as if they're crazy or ridiculous. And yet, 300 years deep into modernity, there are so many unanswered questions, and so much chaos at the heart of everything.

bg Can you give some examples of what you mean about the art world?

ay The institution of art is powered through the market, and through social elites strongly invested in the status quo.

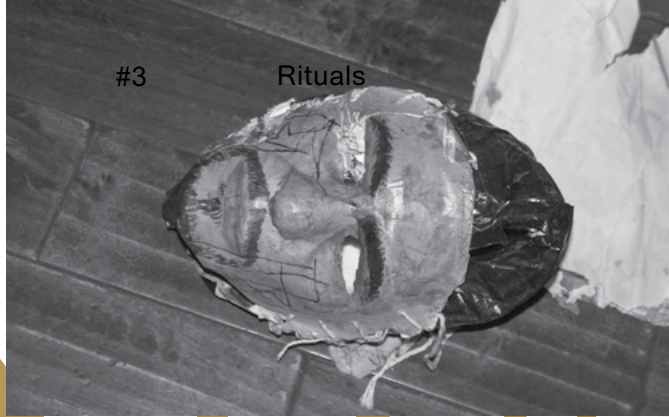
But it's easy to forget that. For example, it often feels as if art stars get their status purely through hard work and talent when there are so many other things going on. It's not just a meritocracy. There are so many important voices that haven't been heard and that aren't included in the canon.

bg What are some of the difficulties of performing rituals in a gallery?

ay My performance rituals always require the concentration and full engagement of the participants. My greatest challenge is the way that people approach coming to an art event. People come late or come flustered or will leave half way through. It's very difficult to achieve the level of concentration and group participation that I'm after when that's going on. That's especially true of performance art, rather than say, theater, where there's this legacy that teaches us how to behave.

bg In *Afternoon Enchantments: Rituals For Finding Your Way Home* you created opportunities for us, in our own time, to decide what the most important thing was for us to sacrifice that day. How do you structure your role as a teacher or guide?

ay Taking on the position of shaman or guide is one of the ways I hope to address the ideas of power and authority inherent in any ritual event. And yet, in my heart I am an anarchist. If I could make these events happen without leading them I would. If everyone knew the words already and could come together already knowing all of the steps to make the events happen, that would be great, but I haven't found a way. I want to create the space and the opportunity to help us shift our way of conceiving the world. I mean art can do so much, why is it that we ask so little of it? Does it always have to be only for intellectual or aesthetic contemplation, or can it do more?



Rafael Esparza

Photos by Lorraine Garcia.

Rafael Esparza is a multidisciplinary artist living and working out of Los Angeles. An investigation of both personal and non-personal histories that have constructed existing ideas around the body weave in and out his body of work. He is invested in creating and experiencing moments in time inaccessible to him; using performance and installation as his main form of inquiry. His interrogation of written histories and the lack of documented moments in time are the primary inspiration for his works. Rafa is male. Is 31 years old. Stands 6'2", and currently weighs 231 lbs.

Rafa Esparza My grandparents were the first people who settled the *pueblo* where my parents were born in Mexico. I think if there was a beginning, in terms of thinking about a home, that would be a good place to start. My father grew up making adobe bricks, like most men in the *pueblo*. It was the male thing to do.

Brian Getnick What were the bricks used for?

re They would sell the bricks, but also used them to build their own homes. It was a fairly new town, so people could just go to an open space and be like, this is my home. That was in Durango, Mexico. My dad now lives in Pasadena. The reason I wanted to learn about brick making was I think initially I needed a bonding experience with my dad because we were going through a rough patch.

bg How many years ago was this?

re Three years ago. I was — still am — dealing with my gayness. And learning about my dad, learning about

these bricks, well, they're really loaded objects. I started seeing them as a symbol of machismo. Making bricks is a common practice in small *pueblos* throughout Mexico. It has a great deal to do with how masculinity and family units are constructed.

bg On the most basic level, what do you think is the meaning of brick making?

re It is complicated. It's a labor that's created by — I feel weird saying poverty — but it's done in primarily in stricken places. No one in the pueblo could afford to hire someone to build them a home. And at the same time, traditionally, it's seen as a sort of coming of age ritual. In places like where my parents grew up, physical labor divides gender roles and in a way creates this idea of masculinity.

bg So kinds of questions came up between you and your father while you shared in this ritual?

re I asked my dad questions about what he thought his life would be like, before he had a girlfriend or a wife. About what he thought his home would look like. I thought from that first talk that we'd have deeper conversations while he instructed me on how to make the bricks.

bg Did that work out?

re No, not at all. We hardly spoke. It was very meditative. I think any communication we exchanged dealt directly with what we were doing: I need some water, manure or straw.

bg Are those the basic components?

re The dirt has some clay in it, it can't be too dry or too moist. And hay, horse manure, and water. That's it. Then you make this mold out of wood. Because you're supposed to make bricks with a partner, the mold has two bricks, side-by-side. I really like the idea, of having two guys making two bricks, together. So after my father taught me, I just started making them. I made a batch by myself of twelve or fourteen. I started leaving the bricks

in places, using them as markers. I put them in places where I used to cruise: in restrooms, Elysian Park, Griffith Park, UCLA.

bg So there is this labor that people used to do because they actually wanted to build houses and you're doing it now to enter into this bonding ceremony.

re That's totally the intention I had. Like, I'm gonna make this object that's so charged and I'm gonna have this enlightening session with my dad. And instead it became really special, but in a different way. I definitely staged it for there to be a conversation about masculinity. It was so pretentious on my part.

bg Were you able to force a discussion with your father?

re No. I have worked with my dad since I was 14. He's been a construction worker for over 30 years. So when we made the bricks together, memories replayed over and over again. It was meditative for me. Making art, when no one else would even think to call it art, doing something in front of someone made me think how internal so much of the work that I do is.

bg Is there a usefulness to you of sharing your work with other people?

re Yes. I always think of the performance as an object, something that's been building and brewing and there's this thing you want to share with people. I feel like if no one sees it, then it's just a scene in my head.

bg Why not keep it just in your head?

re I find a lot of validation in making objects with my hands. It's always been really important to just make something. I think that was instilled in me as a kid. Especially when you grow up being poor.

bg You grew up poor?

re Poor in Pasadena. I've rarely called myself poor, but definitely I grew up with little means. At a young age I learned the importance of making.

TEEN BEATITUDES



photo by Alexa Weir.
in the photo booth at Edendale in Los Angeles, CA.

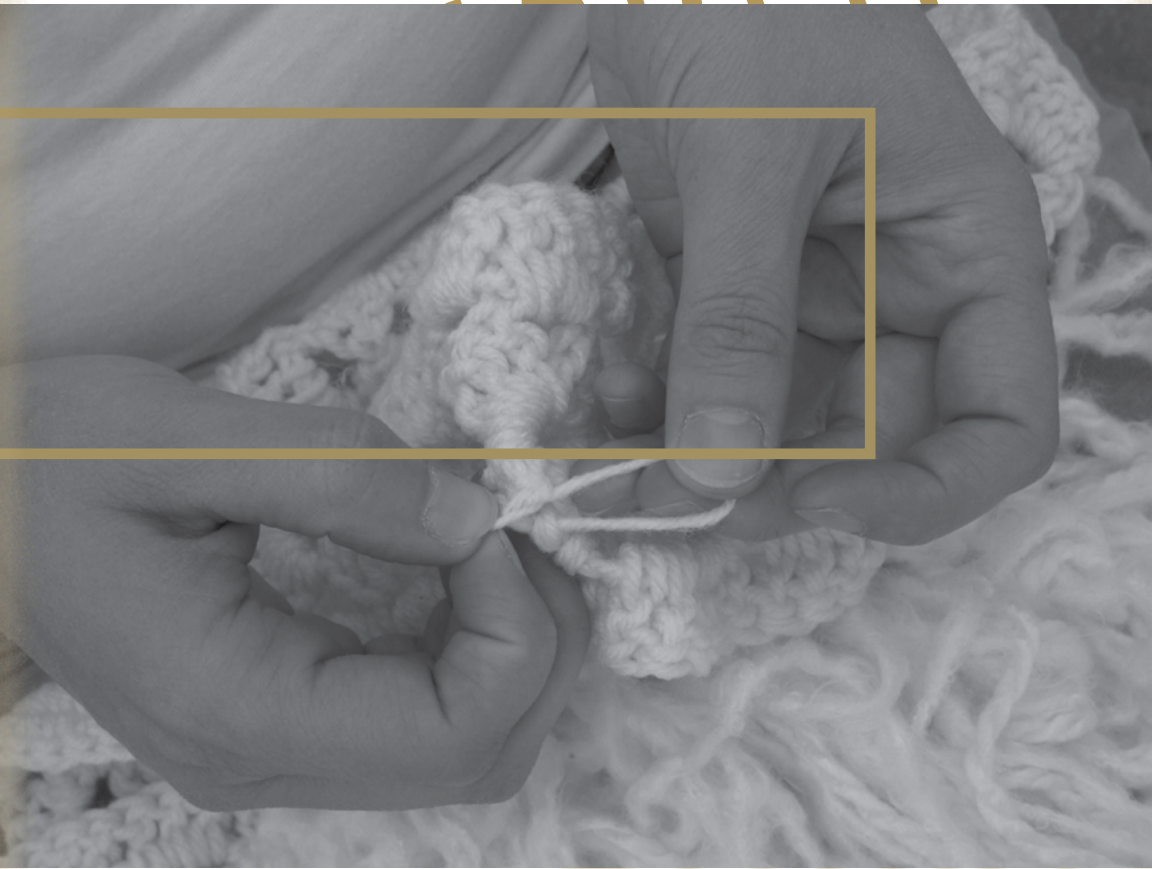
Alexa Weir is a dancer.
She lives and works in Los Angeles.

Alexa Weir

I was sitting on the floor of a room, and the space held the quality of lymph. It felt very distinct... that clarity and directness. I started to throw around the idea that certain qualities, energies that exist in the universe, become these systems of lymph, blood, and bone when manifested in a human body. The inverse supposition came later; that I can only recognize these qualities because they exist within me.

Once, while on an ashram, I heard swami say that when we worship a particular deity, we are not calling to something outside ourselves, but calling to the qualities of that god that is within us. These qualities each have a different feel to them: a taste, a scent, a shade, a sound, a tone, a song. Maybe the human body is comprised of the songs of 1000 gods (approximately).

Teen Beatitudes uses the structure of a teen gossip magazine to explore these qualities and see how the form and the content will affect each other; contaminating the common with the sacred. There are the obvious parallels: idolatry, worship, deification, and fame. As a preteen, I was pretty into these star magazines, but because of limited exposure to TV and film, I had no idea who these people actually were. (But through the June issue of *Tutti Frutti* I knew all sorts of personal facts!) There's this way that fame illuminates certain aspects of these idols and leaves others in the shadows. This brightness leaves the impression of something greater than human-ness, but also... well, it can lack dimension. There is a difference between light from within and an external imposition... and the light looks different, and has a different feel... but sometimes they exist right in each other. Mixed together. That's something that has been coming up. What one person experiences as spiritual may seem entirely material to another. What is it that separates the spiritual from what isn't?



Unravel in the exhibition *Stitches*, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena.
photo by Kosta Potamianos.

Jane Brucker

Rituals
& CONGREGATIONS

Jane Brucker uses objects and performance to engage the viewer through movement, sound, and ritual. Combining found objects and family heirlooms, Brucker examines memory, fragility, and death. Her work has been exhibited at venues throughout the United States and internationally, in Nepal, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

Brian Getnick At what point in your life did art and spirituality first intersect?

Jane Brucker At church when I was young. I loved the sense of community, of all those people coming together. It was my first experience in art and performing, singing in the choir or praying in front of the congregation or making little sheep out of cotton balls. So I went to the School of Theology, and I was in the first Women's Studies in Theology program. I found that theology school was way more radical than art school.

bg Why?

jb Because of the challenges that we were asked to confront within ourselves, looking at culture, society, feminist dialogue, ecology. It's not that art school wasn't challenging for me. I just felt that I wasn't able to engage as deeply. But I think that in terms of how one thinks about oneself within culture, or how one looks at participating, theology school was much more challenging. Part of that was that you're questioning everything — your purpose philosophically, spiritually and intellectually.

bg The art community ostensibly regards itself as secular but I'm wondering about the appearance of so many rituals in performance art. Many of these look to neo-paganism or new age symbolism, while very few engage with Judeo-Christianity, and the ones that do are typically antagonistic toward those symbols, or caught up in an process that seems like a kind of self-flagellation.

jb In some ways, as a culture, we're sadly removed from tradition and ritual. Especially in Los Angeles. Here there's been the freedom to do whatever you want, and an absence of a historical tradition. When I started doing performance, I was just making it up because I had never really seen performance art before. This is one of the positive aspects of working in Los Angeles. On the one hand, having no history has taken away our sense of ritual or being part of a religious or aesthetic tradition, and on the other it's such an open opportunity.

bg Its flaws are its benefits. What kind of spaces are you drawn to working in in a city like Los Angeles?

jb My performances have tended to happen in controlled spaces. I find that a gallery space is a good space. It's quiet. It takes you away from the world outside. If it's a white cube, it doesn't have anything that it's imparting onto the work. In that kind of space, I think I'm able to best allow the viewer or participant to engage with what I'm exploring in the work.

bg The form and the concept.

jb Yeah, both. I did a performance in Santa Monica, years ago, and there were lots of other performances going on. We created an installation, but the way they set the space up, they ended up installing the bar right next to my piece. It's such a different energy, right? And that's how so much contemporary art feels like. You go to the openings at Bergamot Station, and it's like a zoo — food trucks, vodka and maybe some art you can see, but it's so crowded. That's not the experience I want. I would like it to be a chance to remove yourself from yourself, your situation, your life, your city, your world, the world. And just to be there, and engage with your eyes.

bg Does the gallery remind you of a church?

jb I think so. And there's been a lot of writing about that idea. The gallery, especially the white cube, becoming a sacred space. And of course, now, everyone's very

involved in taking that apart. But I think we need it.

bg To be sacred?

jb Yeah. I think it's OK for an art space to be a sacred space. I don't think it means it's overly precious, but I think it needs to be quiet, or removed, so that in your busy life with your cell phone and maneuvering around the freeway, and whatever else we do here in LA, that there's a place we can go and just look, just be. One of my friends is the pattern maker for Colleen Atwood, the Oscar Award winning costume designer. She told me that when she goes to the old fashion houses in the Valley — where they keep all the old movie costumes — that when she's touching the gowns, she can feel the DNA of actors like Greta Garbo or Claudette Colbert. I've always believed that about objects. That's why so many of the objects I work with are heirlooms. I have a sort of reverence in handling those objects and paying tribute to those materials, and to the people who they belonged to. I owe them that.

bg Is that a form of worship?

jb Not really worship, more like an offering. I would use that word.

A MEDIUM

- an agency or means of doing something;
- a means by which something is communicated or expressed;
- the intervening substance through which impressions are conveyed to the senses
- a particular form of storage for digitized information
- the material or form used by an artist, composer, or writer
- a person claiming to be in contact with the spirits and to communicate between the dead and the living.
- the middle quality or state between two extremes; a reasonable balance

Graphic design is a ghost discipline, writes Stuart Bailey: "...[it] only exists when other subjects exist first. It isn't an a priori discipline, but a ghost; both a grey area and a meeting point..."¹

I think it's also a practice of talking to ghosts. There's an invisible body of information that hovers above our visual landscape, a rich surface buzzing with subtext, connotations, and references. As with the unconscious or the spirit world, meeting these entities and translating them into structure, form, and narrative involves a trained sensitivity, as well as fiction, role playing, and speaking in tongues.

In March of 2008, I was driving home from yoga in Los Feliz, when I saw the estate sale sign. As I walked into the sea of jewelry, ceramics, books, records, and clothing, I was told that these things had once belonged to Bella Karish, a well known psychic who passed away recently at 97.

I bought a box of occult publications from the 50s and 60s and a rock collection. I found prints by April Greiman, who happened to be a big influence.² I came across an unpublished manuscript by Annie Besant, a British socialist, women's rights activist and well-known Theosophist and mystic.³ It was typewritten on semi-translucent paper that crinkled when I turned the pages.

1. http://www.typotheque.com/articles/graphic_design_in_the_white_cube

2. April Greiman is an L.A. based designer who made radical work in the 1980's.

3. Last summer, when preparing to teach a seminar in design history and reviewing my notes on early European

Avant-Garde, I remembered how there is very clear historical connection between mystical dabbling and different types of artistic innovation at that time. Dada, Surrealism, Russian Constructivism, DeStijl, and the Bauhaus were all to various degrees informed by the spiritualist and occult ideas. Madame Blavatsky and Annie Besant were particularly influential.



Bella's son told me that when he was growing up in Echo Park his mom was an ordinary housewife whose artistic inclinations amounted to playing the piano and painting. After her husband left her, she began attending various new age workshops popular in the area in which the participants underwent hypnosis. There she discovered a gift for channeling through automatic writing by connecting to another well known psychic Edgar Cayce. Suddenly she was producing pages and pages of writing.⁴ She started a new life at age fifty. Thousands of people came to see her over the next forty years and it was their gifts that filled the estate sale I was wading through.

I liked this woman and her house and thought of her as a late blooming artist. She reminded me of my grandmothers Dina and Ida, my aunt Bella, and somehow my cat Daisy who had always seemed to be like an old lady. Daisy used to sleep on my pillow every night for 10 years and had recently died.

Bella's rock collection began making its way into my projects. I started giving them away as gifts, first thinking of the person and then picking the rock that felt most like them. An abstract shape, with texture, color, and direction that make up its "energy", the rock becomes an emblem or a sigil.⁵

4. Automatic writing is used by mediums use to talk to spirits. For Dada and Surrealist artists, as well as for modernist authors like Joyce, Woolf and Stein it essentially became stream-of-consciousness writing. The focus turned inward and the ghost became the unconscious mind.

5. Seminal artists like Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Malevitch were avid students and followers of Theosophy. Annie Besant wrote a book called *Thought Forms* in

1901. It presented amorphous blobs and geometric shapes in lovely colors that were meant to portray auras and psychic energy fields. These ideas formed the basic notion in abstraction and design, that shape and color could be seen as manifestations of internal states and emotions, and could also be infused with meaning and narrative.

6. Grids, Rosalind Krauss, *October*, Vol. 9, (Summer, 1979), pp. 50-64

The journals became *The Library of Sacred Technologies* (LoST), a branch of *Signify, Sanctify, Believe* (SSB) a collaborative project with Adam Overton and Claire Cronin that explores the intersections of art and religion. LoST invited writers and artists from Los Angeles to contribute work that played on ideas of belief, religion, and magic. By making an interpretation of Bella's pamphlets and appropriating the graphic language of her world, I was able to connect with her and lots of amazing artists, at the same time.

In the 1979 essay *Grids*, Rosalind Krauss wrote that “we find it indescribably embarrassing to mention art and spirit in the same sentence.”⁶ In 2011, *Signify, Sanctify, Believe* not only reminds us that mystical belief systems played a large role on the origins of contemporary art, but invites contemporary artists to take on the forms of religious address directly by producing documents and experiences. Belief systems, in both religion and art, can be invented and played with.⁷

I imagine that Bella was a good medium. People liked her because she was empathetic and genuinely interested in them. She was a meeting point that gave them a framework. Maybe she played piano for them as well.⁸



7. The European Avant-Garde, which gave rise to both contemporary art practice and graphic design, was an exciting moment of connectivity, with an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to merging art and life. The preoccupation with everyday objects and communication became its own arena of design eventually, while contemplation and expression fell under the domain of fine art. But there

has always been a place in the middle, where a few artists and designers have remained and where an exciting blur between disciplines and contexts is possible. The work resulting from the flow of ideas between art and design is particularly visible here in Los Angeles.



8. In 1919, Germany, Johannes Itten, who developed and taught the preliminary course and the master workshops at the Bauhaus, was a vegetarian and a mystic, dressed in robes, and started his foundation course in color, material, and composition with meditation and breathing exercises. His classes encouraged intuition, openness and improvisation through automatic drawing and writing. He hired Kandinsky and Klee as teachers. His approach was directly influenced by Mazdaznan, a religion that he belonged to, which like Theosophy, was inclusive in nature and combined different mythologies and schools of thought. Today we think of Bauhaus as hard lines, primary colors and shiny steel and not a bunch of new agey young radical artists doing yoga, making art out of junk and putting on noise performances and lantern festivals. This expressionistic side of the Bauhaus is less remembered because the teaching focused on process over the results. The extreme social and economic pressures in Germany at the time forced the school to shift into a more pragmatic mode and start designing mass produced objects and architecture. Most introductory courses at art schools today are direct descendants of Itten's innovative curriculum.

Native Strategies

#3

Rituals

& Belief Systems

& New

Rituals
& CONGREGATIONS

WINTER 2012

Signify, Sanctify, Believe

PAGE 46

PAGE 47

SIGNIFY, SANCTIFY, BELIEVE

Native Strategies

#3

Rituals

IS INVESTED IN THE PLAYFUL
EXPLORATION OF REAL AND
IMAGINED BELIEF SYSTEMS.
FACILITATED BY CLAIRE CRONIN,
ADAM OVERTON, AND TANYA
RUBBAK, SSB HAS FEATURED
THE SERVICES, SERMONS, AND
INVENTED RELIGIOUS ARTIFACTS
OF DOZENS OF CONTEMPORARY
ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS,
MOSTLY FROM LOS ANGELES

Signify, Sanctify, Believe



PAGE 48

Rituals

& CONGREGATIONS

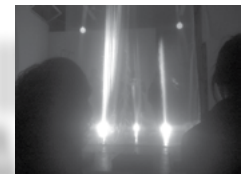
WINTER 2012

& Play

ALBERT ORTEGA
ADAM OVERTON
AKINA COX
ALEXIS DISSELKOEN
ALISE SPINELLA
AMANDA YATES
AMINA CAIN
ANDREW COX
ANDY ROBERT
ANNA MAYER
ANGEL DANIEL
ASHER HARTMAN
AYANA HAMPTON
BLAKE THOMPSON
BRIAN GETNICK



& ELIJAH CRAMPTON
CARL LAUKKANE
CARL POMPOSELLI
CHRIS BASSETT
CHRISTINA ONDRUS
CLAIRE CRONIN
COREY FOGEL
DANIEL BRUMMEL
DANIELLE ADAIR
DAVE WELDZIUS
DAVIS & DAVIS
DAWN KASPER
ECSTATIC ENERGY
CONSULTANTS INC.
(STEVEN L ANDERSON
& TOM MCKENZIE)



PAGE 49

Native Strategies

#3

Rituals



ELIS MCDONALD
ELANA MANN
ELIZABETH CLINE
ELONDA BILLERA
EMILY LACY
ERLKÖNIG
GRAPE GOD
GUAN RONG
GURU RUGU
HANNAH HENDERSON
HOLLY GRESSLEY
HOLLY MYERS
IAN JAMES
JAMES KLOPFLEISCH
JANICE LEE
JEN BRUCE
JOHN BURTLE

JOHNNIE JUNGLEGUTS
JONATHAN BUTT
JOSHUA LEE VINEYARD
KARA TANAKA
KARL ERICKSON
KATIE BACHLER
KRAIG GRADY
LAURA STEENBERGE
LAURA VENA
LIZ GLYNN
MARC HERBST
MARCOS SIREF
MARGARET WAPPLER
MATHEW TIMMONS &
GENEVA SKEEN
WITH ARIANA PETROVIJC
JOSEPH TEPPERMAN



PAGE 50



Rituals

& CONGREGATIONS

WINTER 2012

WE AREN'T TRANSPOSING ANYTHING
& EXPERIMENTAL & FRIENDS
SO MUCH AS UNCOVERING,
DUSTING OFF, TEASING OUT, AND/
OR AMPLIFYING THE RELIGIOUS
AND SPIRITUAL TENDENCIES
UNDERLYING THE WORK, PRACTICES
AND INTERESTS OF THOSE CLOSEST
TO US IN OUR ARTIST-COMMUNITY.
WHILE WE ARE INDEED
INVITING FRIENDS
TO INVENT VARIOUS SPIRITUAL
BEHAVIORS DURING OUR STAY, WE
DON'T IN ANY WAY CLAIM TO BE
INVENTING WHAT WE VIEW AS A
PREVALENT SENSITIVITY AMONG
OUR RANKS. IN LOS ANGELES AND
ELSEWHERE WE REGULARLY
ENCOUNTER ONLY GENUINELY
INTERESTED SEEKERS, WITH WHOM
WE USE ART AND PERFORMANCE TO
EXPERIMENT WITH AND CHALLENGE
OUR BELIEF SYSTEMS, AND OUR
ABILITY TO PERCEIVE VISIBLE AND



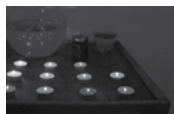
PAGE 51



Native Strategies

#3

Rituals



YECENIA TORRES
 MATIAS VIEGENER
 MATTHEW HENDERSON
 MICHAEL PARKER
 & ALYSE EMDUR
 NATHANIEL DE LARGE
 NATHAN BOCKELMAN
 NEIL HOLYOAK
 NIKO SOLORIO
 NISA SCHOONHOVEN
 OONA GARDNER
 OWEN STOKES HUTCHINSON
 PETER PENDERGRASS
 PULSE EMITTER
 RIAH BUCHANAN
 ROBERT CHEATHAM
 ROBERT SUMMERS
 SAMANTHA COHEN & KRISTIN HANSON



SAMARA GOLDEN
 SAMUEL WHITE
 SASCHA GOLDHOR
 SEAN DOCKRAY
 SIMONE GAD
 SOLOMON BOTHWELL
 & ZEN DOCHTERMAN
 STEPHEN VAN DYCK
 STEVEN L ANDERSON
 TANYA RUBBAK
 TERESA CARMODY
 THE ETERNAL TELETHON
 VAN PHAM
 VERA BRUNNER-SUNG
 VERANDA MOOT
 VICTOR HU
 XHURCH
 YELENA ZHELEZOV
 ZACH KLEYN



Rituals
& CONGREGATIONS

WINTER 2012



INVISIBLE FORCES AND FORMS. AS
 FAR AS OUR WEEKLY CALENDARS
 CAN SEE, WE WITNESS ARTISTS
 WELCOMING EACH OTHER
 INTO THEIR MAGIC CIRCLES
 TO MEDITATE ON THEIR ARTWORKS
 AND PERFORMATIVE RITUALS, IN
 GALLERIES, PROJECT SPACES, LIVING
 ROOMS, AND THE STREET. THESE
 THRESHOLDS, THESE PORTALS,
 THESE CONGREGATIONS HAVE BOTH
 INTENDED AND UNINTENDED EFFECTS
 ON THE FABRIC OF OUR SEMI-
 SECULAR, ARTIST-COMMUNITY.
 THESE THINGS ARE FAKE AND YET
 THEY REAL AND YET THEY ARE
 REAL AND YET THEY ARE REAL.
 EXPERIMENTALISM IN RELIGION AND
 PERFORMANCE PROPOSE TO OFFER
 EITHER A NEW SYSTEM OF BELIEF,
 AND/OR THE DESIRE TO CHIP AWAY
 AT ONE'S PREVIOUS SET OF BELIEFS,
 AND PRESENT TO US A QUEER



Native Strategies

#3

Rituals



Rituals
& CONGREGATIONS

WINTER 2012



LANDSCAPE FULL OF
 & Connecting POTENTIAL.
 UNKNOWN ITSELF IS AN
 PROSELYTISM AESTHETIC FORM OF ADDRESS,
 OFTEN DELIVERED VIA ORATION
 OR LITERATURE, SHAPED IN ORDER
 TO MAXIMIZE ITS ABILITY TO
 TRANSMIT AND CONNECT. AS BOTH
 PERFORMERS AND PROSELYTIZERS
 WE ALL ULTIMATELY HOPE THAT
 PEOPLE WILL LISTEN,
 UNDERSTAND, AND ENGAGE.
 WE WANT TO CONNECT.



Thank You:

Mike Murphy, Father Mike
Mandala, Jennifer Doyle, Eric
Kim and all at Human Resources,
Geneva Skeen, Robert Crouch and
Carol Stakanes and all at LACE,
Hans Kuzmich, Allison D'Amato,
Sammy Loren, Carol Cheh, Jared
Baxter. Johanna Went for hosting
the interview with C. Carr.

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Native Strategies is a five-year study of contemporary performance modalities through the creation of 10 differently themed performance series and 10 uniquely designed journals. Our goal in creating NS is to assert that a spectrum of specific practices are at play in Los Angeles and that diversity provides the most compelling and complex picture of our city's cultural output. In this sense, NS is a taxonomical project with the aim of mapping out precise frameworks for responding to different types of performance. Yet, bringing attention to a multiplicity of forms challenges the historical tendency to allow certain ones to become monolithic. *Native Strategies* is here as a vehicle for a more truthful telling of the story of LA performance art between the years 2011 and 2016 and to use this research as the basis for a book, each journal becoming a separate chapter.

To understand what performance art in LA is, we need to look outside of our immediate communities, to meet people we don't know yet, and to stretch across the terrain.

Native Strategies is directed by Brian Getnick and Tanya Rubbak

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Brian Getnick, born 1976, Utica New York, is a performance artist and sculptor living in Los Angeles. In 2004, he received his MFA in Fiber and Material Studies at the school of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 2008 he was nominated for the fourth annual performance prize in Trento Italy through the Galleria Civica. Since then he has performed in contexts ranging from queer night clubs to Red Cat; the Roy and Edna Disney Hall showcase for performance art. Dedicated to his city and to enabling the work of fellow Angeleno performance artists, he has recently launched *Native Strategies*, a Los Angeles focused performance art journal and showcase.

Tanya Rubbak is a multidisciplinary artist and graphic designer based in Los Angeles. She creates work in collaborative settings, focusing on publications and other embodied printed and digital matter that lives in the intervening spaces between design, art, performance, and authorship.

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NATIVE STRATEGIES

Winter 2012



- Cynthia Carr
- Samara Golden
- Liz Glynn
- Samuel White
- Amanda Yates
- Rafa Esparza
- Alexa Weir
- Jane Brucker
- Tanya Rubbak
- Signify, Sanctify, Believe

Rituals
& CONGREGATIONS