

PALLET MAGAZINE

November 2016

Entheon, Sanctuary of Visionary Art now under construction at CoSM.

How did you come to have your first entheogenic experience / experiences?

I was curious about psychedelics since I saw articles about LSD in Life magazine when I was 12 years old. I wrote my junior high school science project about LSD, before it became illegal, but never took it till one desperate night in 1975 when I was 21 years old.

At 21, my life felt meaningless and filled with unbearable pain so I wanted to kill myself to end the suffering. I did not believe in God but nevertheless dared God to appear and show me a sign that I should choose life.

It was the last day of art school and I was saying good-bye to my professor on the street corner, when a beautiful girl from my class drove by the corner where we were standing and invited us to her after-school party that evening. It was only two minutes we were standing there and if I had not been on that street corner, I would probably not be alive today.

The professor picked me up later that evening to drive us to the party. He had some LSD in a bottle of Kahlua. I drank about half. When we got to the party, I gave the girl giving the event the rest of the bottle, which she drank.

On her couch something miraculous happened that evening. I found God in the center of my being. When I closed my eyes I was inside a giant tunnel, made of living mother of pearl. It was like continuously slowly spinning into a conch shell. I was in the dark but spiraling toward the light. The brilliant love light of God was just around the edge, and I was in the dark, but going toward the light. All the shades of grey connected the two extremes. My path was re-set, I would change my name to Grey and bring the opposites together as my artistic mission. I felt a philosophical mystical switch had turned on in my soul. It was a literal turning point.

When I talked to the girl, who was Allyson, of course, about my mystical awakening on her couch, she told me of her spiritual opening through LSD, and we fell in love and have been on a lifelong journey together, now with a community who has come together to build a sanctuary of visionary art.

Humanity is returning to the old time religion of psychedelics. Both Eastern and Western civilization were founded under the influence of Entheogens. The earliest religious text, the Hindu Rig Veda has songs to Soma, a visionary plant that connected people with the Gods. Socrates, Plato and thousands of Greeks drank the Kykeon, a psychedelic brew that allowed them to see the realm of ideal forms and archetypal Gods. Psychedelics

administered in a safe and supportive environment can allow a person to reclaim their own soul, their own purpose and mission, and see that we are living in a sacred world worth saving at any cost or effort.

Who were you and what direction were you headed in before that?

I feel that my experience of transformation mirrors a lot of young people. I was a very serious young existentialist and believed in an un-enchanted reductionist materialist worldview. An agnostic or atheist perspective simply seemed most true in a world defined by corporate consumerist desires and unjust wars. Although I worked hard on my artwork, it all seemed pointless until I took the acid and met God, then met divine love in skin, Allyson.

You worked in a morgue. Why? And what were your duties and what did you learn?

I wanted to study the nature of the body and get to examine close-range the miraculous box that consciousness comes in. It was 1976 and I was trying to figure out a new way of making art. The art magazines were saying "painting is dead" so I went to study dead things and re-imagine what art could be.

I embalmed people, dissected bodies and harvested parts of the body to be studied by med students.

Why did you change your name to Grey?

When I went through the Polar Unity Spiral I could see that every shade of greyness helped bring the opposites together and that would be my task as an artist.

Performance art with your wife led to the Sacred Mirror series. Can you tell me about that?

Back in 1978, we did a performance together called "Life Energy," and I made life-sized charts of the body to place on the gallery wall -- one of the Eastern model of Life Energy with chakras, auras and acupuncture meridians and points, and the other was the Western anatomical model of the nervous system. I demarcated an area in front of the image, so that a person could stand in that zone and try to mirror the system on the chart within their own body. Afterwards, Allyson suggested, "It would be great if you did fully detailed oil paintings of these different systems, body, mind & spirit, people could stand in front of them and get in touch with their deepest self." Allyson was really the inspiration of the painting series and she even came up with the name, "Sacred Mirrors."

Many of your paintings depict the experiences you've had with LSD and DMT. How close are they, visually, to what you've witnessed?

One of the most important of these journeys was on June 3, 1976. Lying in bed with Allyson, my mind was going 5,000 miles an hour past endless infinite imagery, until I popped into this really bright, vast space. I no longer had a physical body. Instead, I was my spiritual essence, a sphere of light with a cylindrical core running through the center. The light took the shape of a toroidal energy ball. The essence of my being or soul was one of these energy balls, a fountain and drain of light. I felt more awake, like a veil had been lifted from the material world. Awakening from the flesh dream, I recovered my timelessness, connecting with every other being in the universe, an endless interconnectedness of cells in the body of God. This resolved all tension between self and other, while maintaining an individual point of view. Even more astonishing, Allyson experienced the same transpersonal

space at the same time, which we confirmed with our drawings. We called it the "Universal Mind Lattice" because it was a vast web of souls connected as one infinite being.

This mystical experience changed our lives and our art and led us onto the path we are on today. My painting of the *Universal Mind Lattice* is at the center of the *Sacred Mirror* series. When I was in Japan having an art exhibit, a man visited me and said he had been struck by lightning in his heart region, he showed me the huge elliptical burn scar on his chest, and he said when he died he was in the Universal Mind Lattice. He tried to describe it to people and they wondered about his sanity, but then a friend of his showed him my painting and he began to cry.

There are some paintings that attempt to transcribe a moment from the journey, such as *Theologue*, *Net of Being*, *Transfiguration*, or *Universal Mind Lattice*. Many other people have told me they have seen similar vistas or beings. That's part of the magic of visionary art. We are attempting to share our mystical experiences through a painting. No painting will give you the same multidimensional shift to your being that psychedelics can give, but we will have to see about VR...

What is / was The Chapel of Sacred Mirrors?

CoSM stands for Chapel of Sacred Mirrors. The Sacred Mirrors are a series of 21 artworks that allow us to see ourselves, and each other, as reflections of the divine. The mission of CoSM is to build a sanctuary of visionary art to inspire a global community and leave a lasting message of our creative spiritual movement.

The Sacred Mirrors series, painted over a ten year period from 1979 through 1988, has developed an international following. The book *Sacred Mirrors*, in print since 1990, is translated into nine languages. In 1985, Allyson and I took MDMA for the first time and had a simultaneous vision of a Chapel environment for the Sacred Mirrors series.

CoSM became a non-profit organization in 1996 and became a church in November of 2008. To pray for guidance in building the Chapel, we were advised by shaman, Alex Stark, to begin holding Full Moon ceremonies. CoSM Full Moon ceremonies began in our Brooklyn loft in January 2003. Open to the public, attendance grew rapidly, drawing together a spiritual creative community. Growing in size and reputation, CoSM was offered a temporary home in Chelsea, the club and gallery district of New York City. There, CoSM provided an extraordinary environment for contemplation of the collection and a center for events encouraging the creative spirit.

After much searching for land on which to build the permanent temple, on September 12, 2008, the Chapel of Sacred Mirrors acquired a home in Wappinger, New York. After hosting hundreds of visionary cultural activities in New York City, CoSM closed it's doors in Chelsea on January 1, 2009 to reopen in the exquisite tranquil beauty of the Hudson Valley.

CoSM moved to a forty-acre interfaith retreat center in the scenic Hudson Valley, sixty-five miles north of New York City, walking distance from the MetroNorth train stop of New Hamburg. An unbroken chain of CoSM Full Moon celebrations continue to be held every month, now in the library of the Grey House, the visionary Victorian where community gathers, celebrates, educates and worships. On this site, a temple and altar complex will weave a mythic narrative of humanity's new relationship with nature and cosmos. Here, our staff and creative people from around the world are building an oasis for spiritual and cultural renewal.

Now being built at CoSM is the exhibition of visionary art called Entheon. Entheon means a place to discover the God within and it will be a three story 12,000 square foot display of the finest original artwork of the Visionary Art movement, where precious paintings, drawings, sculpture and moving images resonate with the highest states of consciousness. A room with cathedralesque latticework ceilings and archangels will display the Sacred Mirrors.

Allyson's secret language will surround the upper walls of Entheon, right before the roofline. It is a text she witnessed falling from the sky and floating over her body during a psychedelic session where she was attempting to see God. The language was divine intelligence running through everything, a white light she said defined the edges of things. The language is unpronounceable and cannot be translated. She also calls it the Language of Creative Expression. There will be numerous areas dedicated to Allyson's work at Entheon. We have since learned that many people have seen alien alphabets during their inner journeys.

Entheon has been under construction since Autumn 2014. The walls are up, the roof is on, and the interior spaces are framed and insulated, we are working on the mechanicals in our current phase. Two successful Kickstarter campaigns involving over 4,500 people have helped CoSM raise over half a million dollars toward the completion of the interior exhibition spaces, and initiate the unique sculptural exterior of Entheon. Entheon is targeted to open in late 2017, it will open before all the sculptures are on the exterior of the building, which will be added as we can afford them. The entire exterior sculptural countenance is estimated to cost \$1.5 Million.

Our dear friend, a visionary artist and Academy Award winning Disney digital sculptor, Ryan Tottle, (whose credits include Frozen & Zootopia), collaborated for two years to transform my drawings into the 3D model of Entheon that will be printed out, cast in concrete and form the skin of the building.

This sacred space will provide an uplifting environment for the original masterpieces that have become guiding visions for a growing community.

What is Visionary Art/Culture?

Visionary mystical experiences are humanity's most direct contact with God and are the creative source of all sacred art and wisdom traditions. The best currently existing technology for sharing the mystic imaginal realms is a well-crafted artistic rendering by an eye-witness.

Mystic visionary artists distill the multi-dimensional, entheogenic journey into externally crystallized theophanies, icons embedded with evolutionary world views. Since mystic visionary artists paint the transcendental realms from observation, their work offers a growing body of evidence substantiating the divine imaginal realms and by extension, Spirit itself.

The mystic state described by visionary artists includes images of unity, cosmic oneness, transcendence of conventional space and time, a sense of the sacred in having encountered ultimate reality, positive affect, vivid color and luminosity, symbolic pattern language, imaginal beings and infinite geometric jewel-like vistas.

For pilgrims to the sacred inner dimensions, visionary art provides validation for their own glimpses, and proves the universal nature of the imaginal realms. Reflecting the luminous richness of higher spiritual worlds, visionary

art activates our light body, empowers our creative soul, and stirs our deepest potential for positive, transformative action in the world.

Humanity's materialistic worldview must transition to a sacred view of Oneness with the environment and cosmos or risk self-destruction due to continued abuse of the life-web. Great works in the creative arts call us to imagine our higher unity as humanity evolves toward a sustainable planetary civilization.

Mystic Visionary Art is a manifestation of the Primary Religious Experience. The word religion comes from the Greek meaning "to tie back." The Primary Religious Experience is a personal connection with Source that "ties us back" to our own divinity.

What's next for the Greys?

We will complete the Sanctuary of Visionary Art, Entheon, and promote the power and importance of this approach to art for the rest of our lives. We wish to endow CoSM with support from the community so this experiment in the fusion of creativity and spirituality will play a role in evolving consciousness for generations to come.

ALEX GREY



Use of Art

Site Map

Copyright © 2024 Alex Grey
All Rights Reserved

Built with ♥ in Wappinger, New York