Peering into the Crack of the Divine

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Masters of Fine Arts by Research
2017
Foreword:

My recent body of work is a personal enquiry into altered states of consciousness, as a catalyst for intuitive thought and an attempt to structure a personal language from within those processes. Given this, during the process of writing this thesis I have experimented with various approaches of altering my perception and cognition. I have done this as a means to attempt, as far as it is possible in an institutional context, to loosen the inhibitions of language. Accordingly, I have alternated between micro-dosing psychoactive substances such as LSD and psilocybin, I have practiced lucid dreaming techniques which effect perception in both the dream state and waking consciousness, I have explored dance and chant induced trance states, sensory deprivation tanks and on one occasion taken part in the native Mesoamerican (originating from the Aztec and Wixáritari people) ceremony of the ‘Temazcal’ or sweat lodge.

My interest in these states stems from one defining moment, an experience that almost all that go through it proclaim to be the most profound, moving, yet indescribable experience imaginable to the human mind.\(^1\) This is a state induced by what is widely considered to be the most powerful psychoactive substance, Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) or as it frequently called ‘The Divine Moment of Truth’. On which I will elaborate in further pages.

I would also like to express that for the purposes of this thesis I will be referring to the word ‘divine’ as an all-encompassing rhetoric, as for this discussion I would like to speculate on the word as a physiological commonality shared between various epistemologies to express the supernatural realms. Whether that is in the discourse of religion, science or in secular metaphysics.


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“There are two states in which man arrives at the rapturous feeling of existence, namely in dreaming and in intoxication”
~Friedrich Nietzsche

"In the province of the mind what one believes to be true, either is true or becomes true within certain limits. These limits are to be found experimentally and experientially. When so found these limits turn out to be further beliefs to be transcended. In the province of the mind there are no limits. However, in the province of the body there are definite limits not to be transcended."
~John C. Lilly, M.D.

“God gives the nuts, but he does not crack them”
~Franz Kafka
Tripping on the cracks

It is with a heavy stride that I walk the thin corridor of human perception

Nothing but a mere smear of certainty on the surface of the concrete,

Claiming;

This is colour
This is shape
This is weight
This is language
This is “reality”

It is easy to tread contently

Steadily down time and space

Future goals
Nostalgic recollections
A sense of self
Producing offspring

And teaching them how to continue the walk

What if I stumble on a crack?

Catching a glimpse of the rich soil beneath

A fantastic green weed protruding a crevice

Or a light,

Brighter than could possibly be conceived

Shining immanently through a tiny slit

I should feel the need to demolish these constraints
It is with the desperate sledgehammer of religion

    The screaming shovel of art

The glorious golden chisel of psychedelics

That I can begin to attempt to rupture the time space tunnel further

    The sterile mist of postmodern cynicism

Has made it hard to hit it with real passion

    But if for a moment, mid swing

The mist clears

And my tool strikes a weak spot

Fracturing the concrete proper

I may get a glimpse into the abyss

    Dropping the heavy object

    Getting down on all fours

    Arse up in the air

    Leaving my body, my self

    Vulnerable

    to time and space

Just so I can peer into the infinite

~
A void, a rupture, a gateway, a door, a threshold, these are words that have been used throughout history in religion, occultism, metaphysics, meditation, transpersonal psychology, transcendentalism and psychedelic discourse, to begin to attempt to describe what it is that happens to human perception when it conceives of the universe outside the confines of earthly consciousness. Though these words can only be symbolic as they are the thoroughfares into worlds that surpass language. When the human mind experiences a phenomena, or rather noumena, outside of the brain’s primary function, scrambling the programming of our software it becomes witness to otherwise invisible energies and waves of our inner and outer worlds (if in fact there is a distinction between the two).

Of course humans have been continually stumbling upon new invisible energies in the physical world throughout history, from gravity to micro and gamma waves, radio waves, electro-magnetics, the components of light and so on and these make their way into our concrete understandings of the world which collectively we are forced to agree upon and call science and we can communicate about these things with the signifiers of language. But there are experiences amongst individuals that have been harder to justify as ‘reality’ for that very reason, that they are individual and thus a consensus on this plain of perception cannot be reached. While the beliefs in other worlds, dimensions, beings and creators have always been pervasive in human culture, it has been at best believed that only but a select few can consciously access these ‘higher’ realms. In the contemporary western world this is scarcely treated with seriousness in modern science and in psychology, an illness.

It is both credibly speculated and verified that many of history’s great thinkers, philosophers and artists gained access to these higher realms through psychoactive substances. Plato drank Kykeon in the town of Eleusís and asserted its profound transformative powers. Kykeon, which was a concoction of water, lime and barley, has
been suggested by Gordon Wasson and Albert Hoffman (discoverer of LSD) to have contained the fungus ergot (Claviceptaceae) which grows on grains (namely barely and rye) which would have contributed to it’s hallucinogenic properties.² Friedrich Nietzsche, Thomas De Quincey, Arthur Schopenhauer, Walter Benjamin, Henri Bergson, Jean Paul Sartre all dabbled and referenced opium or mescaline in their writings. William S Burroughs, famous for his novel “Junkie” and “The Yage Letters”, tried just about every mind altering substance he could get his hands on, notably yage (ayahuasca), opium (later, mostly heroin, although not considered a psychedelic, most certainly a mind-alterer).

In the early 1940’s the Swiss chemist Albert Hoffman, was developing new pharmaceuticals by synthesising Ergot, a fungus that grows on certain grains, specifically rye and barely. In his laboratory he inadvertently spilt some of the chemical compound, which in turn absorbed into his skin and he went home feeling fairly dizzy and peculiar. Having deduced that this may have been an effect of the chemical, the next day he ingested a small amount. This was the first intentionally administered dose of Lysergic acid diethylamide.⁵ His bicycle trip home inadvertently became the first LSD trip. By the 1950’s LSD was being tested in hospitals and psychiatric wards across America and Canada. Interestingly, it was not only being tested on patients and paid test subjects but on the staff themselves⁶. This assessment was intended to allow the doctors and psychiatrists to experience what it was to see the world through the eyes of the patients in the mental ward - it was claimed that they would experience what it is like to be a schizophrenic or a psychotic. Of course this was a huge over generalisation, there are too countless a number of variables of a myriad of minds, to claim that everyone who

⁶ ibid.
perceives the world in a drastic or even different way sees it the same. In 1960 the author Ken Kesey (One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest) took part in one of these experiments as a paid subject, to raise money for a road trip, which he had organised with a posse of friends and writers (who later became known as the merry pranksters). Awestruck by his Acid trip, he stole a few pints of the Lysergic Acid Diethylamide from the hospital. He took it with him across America on a school bus, visiting influential writers and artists along the way. In turn, this triggered the birth of the 60’s hippie movement. By the mid 1960’s, the biggest free love movements in history were being played out in America and across the western world. The late 1960's however brought with it the Nixon administration who were alarmed at the fact people were protesting for their liberty, the black civil rights movement, a new wave of feminism and masses against the war in Vietnam. The government wanted to find a way to bring a halt to this unrest, while they knew they couldn’t make being black or a woman or a pacifist illegal. The government proclaimed the War on Drugs, which meant that after they had successfully demonised all drugs with widespread propaganda littered with fear, death, murder and psychosis, the stigma of drug use was pinned to certain groups. Afro-Americans, empowered women and hippies were explicitly targeted. Authorities now had legitimised reasons to enter the private properties and headquarters of the leaders of these liberation movements. The propaganda machine of the War on Drugs ended clinical and scientific research on psychedelics in America and around the world and largely stigmatised their use amongst the general public for over twenty years. Over this period of time the 1970’s, 1980’s and 1990’s general population once again seemed to become increasingly invested and

7 Kesey, K, 1962. One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, Viking Press, NY.  
9 Wolfe, T. 1968. The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, Farrar Straus Giroux, USA.  
10 Baum D, 2016. How to Win the War on Drugs, harpers.org/archive/2016/04/legalize-it-all/1/  
obsessed in commercialism, media, advertising and materiality in general.

These decades too, saw art flux into post-modernism, which could be seen as being subjugated to cynicism, scepticism and a general distrust for any idealism, excluding perhaps consumerism.

“…This cadence also has increasingly driven ideas of art far away from the human awareness of the intangible. It has forced art toward the hard objective exterior worlds, those perceived and appreciated solely by and via the senses. In this wise, recent art has become preoccupied increasingly with form alone, and indeed any novel change in form has sufficed in many cases to constitute the ultrafashionable in contemporary art. It would have to be held, of course, that this recent trend has not been without merit in some cases. Regrettably, however, some of this art will not persist as valuable expression even though it has been given vast space in the media and art annuals. Far more unfortunate is the fact that this cloying search for novel form--reflecting what can only be called the materialistic approach to vision and imagination--has served to act as a juggernaut of suppression over the vast human realms of the subjective, the transcendent, the mythic, the metaphysical, the parapsychological and the psychic, and even the religious.”

It could be speculated that this had to do with psychedelics being largely out of the mindset of the masses, when art was largely catering to them.

What is certain though, is that at time when psychedelics where largely present in society, individual and collective ideas of what was considered ‘normal’ were significantly loosened, consequently having a significant impact on the cultural landscape of the time.

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The term *psychedelic*, coined by British psychiatrist Humphry Osmond, is derived from the Greek words ‘psyche’ meaning soul or mind and ‘delein’ meaning manifest, hence ‘soul-manifesting’. Aldous Huxley proposed the word *phanerothyme* (Greek phaneroein- visible and thymos- soul) thus the visible soul, but this never took off. *Entheogen* has become an often-used term denoting the use of psychedelics in a religious/spiritual context. Clearly there is a consensus amongst people that the psychedelic experience is a mystical one. Including British philosopher Alan Watts who has described the experience by dividing it into four main characteristics.

- A slowing down of time by which he describes, “one’s normally compulsive concern for the future decreases, and one becomes aware of the enormous importance and interest of what is happening at the moment.”
- An ‘awareness of polarity’, Watts explains this as a “vivid realization that states, things, and events that we ordinarily call opposite are interdependent, like back and front, or the poles of a magnet.”
- An ‘awareness of relativity’ which he says arises from the awareness of polarity. His personal account concludes, “I see that I am a link in an infinite hierarchy of processes and beings, ranging, from molecules through bacteria and insects to human beings, and, maybe, to angels and gods—a hierarchy in which every level is in effect the same situation.”
- Lastly, Watts describes an ‘awareness of eternal energy’ as a sensation “often in the form of intense white light […] and one sees quite clearly that all existence is a single energy, and that this energy is one’s own being.”

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If I attempt to use Kantian philosophy as a tool, not to see beyond the crack, but to try to explain what it may be to see beyond the crack, the word ‘noumenon’ might be used. The term noumenon describes a perception of something that transcends the phenomenological understanding of that thing - that is, the way the entity exists irrespective of how the observer views it. But not for this jolly old Kant - for him it seems to be impossible to transcend direct observation or experience without using reason, language and classification to correlate with the phenomena. Kant claims noumena escape human understanding and although human minds can attempt to “correlate in useful ways, perhaps even closely accurate ways” to envisage or fathom the “way things are”, the “things-in-themselves” ultimately can only exist as an idea within phenomenological discourse.

In this paper I will consider the extent to which an individual, particularly the artist, can create their own language of self or unself, by forming a relationship between the aesthetics of both the ego and the transpersonal. Ideally, this would be a language separate to monotheistic, rigidly bound culturally ideals and epistemologies comprised of fixed and established beliefs, empirical truths, and rationales. But rather than rejecting the structures, symbols and languages of one’s socially constructed ego, these would be used autonomously and instinctually, in order to represent one’s own relationship between the physical and metaphysical realms.

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15 ibid.
Kapusta, 2016
Cabbage, Imitation Gold Leaf.
“Boże Drogi- My Dear Goodness”, Interlude Gallery, Sydney
Cracking the Mind’s Reducer Valve

To foredally to the brink
Parallels bumped into
Synchronicitea
Suffixes just so and aesop’s
Ass and pig and wolf
Pewter people lined up in a row
Words worthy though insufficient
Oboe’s long bellow
Shaking at the hinges
A fried egg
Broadcasting it’s past
And elapsed future
Up until all of the suddens implode
Down furrowing through the floor
Single channelled neurons snap
A long forgotten instinct
Grabs 3 five and 7 channels more
Shaking into posingtrons
Alleviating the gamut of human tension
Recalibrating the rhizome root
The canister is self-sealing
Like a non existent idiom
On the tip of the tongue
The cusp can only be the brink
French philosopher Henri Louis Bergson writes about the function of the human brain as being ultimately limiting. That although the mind has within it an immense capacity to perceive all the complexities of the universe or the “mind at large” it has evolved to have a sort of a reducing valve in order to perceive only that which is needed to exist as a species on this particular planet. The human brain must narrow its focus to basic survival to find food, shelter, protection and to reproduce and raise future generations of the human animal.

Aldous Huxley discusses Bergson and this reducer valve allegory in his book *The Doors of Perception*. Which is a written account of the authors experience with mescaline. Huxley considers the effects of this psychoactive substance as not one, which expands the mind, but rather one that allows the loosening of this limiting biological function of the brain. Subsequently allowing the user to experience things in their surroundings closer to how they really are, rather than their symbolic representations, which are tied to linguistics and the five basic human senses. Huxley uses The German word used by Meister Ekhart, “istigheit” (is-ness), to describe this perception of objects. For instance, Huxley deliberates over the intensity of the fervent colours and breathing petals of the flowers in a vase, the astonishing dance of the furniture in his room, which begin to exist without the dependence of spatiality but with the graceful flowing certainty of pattern and composition, and the eternal glory and complexity of his flannel trousers. All of which play out not in the duration of time but in the perpetual present. For within every object lies the infinite divine. This is something that rings amongst numerous religious scriptures: The presence of god in the fabric of everything.

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18 E.g. Corinthians 8:6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.
To peel back this film of learnt perception, in order to briefly separate the ego and the spirit, we must first crack it. Becoming the “divine not self”. Huxley explains that upon realising the divine not self one realises the trivialities of day-to-day life and is caught in the awe of the glories of the universe. Of course this is not productive to human relations and the productivity of a species at large for one could quite happily exist in this state of enhanced observation of inner and outer consciousness, after the realisation that earthly pursuits and ambitions in a limited mind are simplistic and meaningless.

In regards to psychedelic substances, I will in this paper, mostly be referring to DMT (Dimethyltryptamine) as my personal experience with this ethneogen was the point in my life at which I most vividly and profoundly stuck my head into the crack of the divine. After having experienced such a revelation I could not disregard it when creating new work, no matter how much it deviated from the aesthetics and processes I had carved out for myself up until that point. Something that differentiates DMT from other psychedelics is its complete abstraction from reality. With LSD, psilocibin or Mescaline you perceive the world around you with an intensified hyper reality, whereas with DMT you find yourself bodiless on a completely unknown plain of existence.

DMT is a chemical compound, which is endogenous in many species of plants and in the human body. It is largely speculated to be produced in the pineal gland (it has been found in rats pineal in 2013, but yet to be tested on humans19) which interestingly, is the only part of the brain without a symmetrical paired counterpart, located in between the left and right lobes of the brain. It literally sits on its own in the crack of the brain. Strikingly, in numerous ancient religions the imagery of the source of enlightenment and the beaming gate into higher consciousness and inner realms, in the body is often

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portrayed as being located in this place. The third eye in Hinduism, the ‘Keter’ in Judaic Kabbalah, the crown chakra or the thousand petalled lotus in Eastern Ayurvedic tradition, to name a few\(^\text{20}\). Rick Strasman in his book *DMT : The Spirit Molecule : A doctor’s revolutionary research onto the biology of near-death and mystical experiences* published in 2001 (derived from his studies in the early 1990’s, the first scientific psychedelic studies in 20 years in the US) discusses the pineal gland at length. Strassman draws references from Decartes, who speaks of the pineal as ‘Seat of the Soul’\(^\text{21}\); to the extraordinary synchronicity between the Tibetan Buddhist scriptures, that teach of the 49 day period in ‘Bardo’ between re-incarnation and Strassman’s realization that 49 days is the time that the pineal gland and gender of a human fetus take to develop in the womb from conception. (Of course being a scientist he can only put this down to an interesting consequence).

Although our bodies create DMT, the compound is not released endogenously except at time of death (arguably at birth), near death (or clinical death) experiences, or during deeply distressing physical trauma. When smoked (or ingested in the form of Ayahuasca) the subject experiences phenomena that when recounted sound incredibly similar to the reports of people having survived clinical deaths. Typically, a celestial tunnel of darkness leading to a bright light as your whole ego and memories leave you in a final flash and if one intakes enough (generally a second or third deep inhalation) they will penetrate the immense light of infinite geometry (which Terence McKenna\(^\text{22}\) calls the chrysanthemum\(^\text{23}\)) and they will be “shot” completely out of their body into what is described as another dimension. Whereupon one often come across extra-dimensional

\(^{21}\) ibid. pg60
\(^{22}\) McKenna was an American author, mystic, ethnobotanist and advocate for the spiritual use of psychedelics. A pioneer in the field.
\(^{23}\) Terence McKenna describes DMT Trip. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VavdCpewQbA viewed: 15.04.17
beings, entities, angels or ‘face-less self transforming fractal beings that can sing matter into shape’ which McKenna calls the ‘machine elves’\textsuperscript{24}. These entities communicate with you, welcome you and teach you about their realm. In my case, I was being inspected and what felt like being operated on by beings that looked very similar to how interstellar aliens have been depicted throughout history; thin bodied, grey-blue scaled skin, big hairless heads, with immense eyes and tiny jaws. Whether we perceive these beings as we do because of our cultural context or our cultural context includes these because of these naturally occurring visions is of debate in the discourse of psychonauts\textsuperscript{25}. There are books that correlate depictions of ‘spacemen’ and super-natural beings throughout human history. My impressions of these beings in the following days where of them possibly being future human life forms. But this along with any other visuals you take back to your physical body can only really exist as speculation.

The DMT trip (when smoked) rarely lasts more than ten minutes, but given the subject being completely impervious to the constraints of time and the seemingly endless and simultaneous flood of data, it’s typically perceived as gazing into the infinite, and it comes of a surprise to the user to hear that they were only gone for a short secular moment. Certainly this was the case for me. And with the immediate sense of returning back into my body on earth came an anxiety and claustrophobia of returning back into the flesh and bone reducer valve.


\textsuperscript{25}A term coined by Ernst Jünger in 1970, meaning, someone who explores altered states, unique states of mind and possibilities outside the mind altogether.
Wanjina cave paintings, in the Australian Kimberley ranges, depicting ‘sky people’, symbolising beings of rain and fertility dating tens of thousands of years.
Costumes depicting supernatural beings as a part of the ‘Haine’ ceremony of the Selk-nam people of Patagonia. Photographs by Martin Gusinde, 1920's.
Super natural beings as depicted by the shamanic yarn painting of the Wixáritari people.
Ritual, Dance, Performance – Splitting the body and spirit

Noo, I ain’t superstitious but a black cat just crossed my trail

Faruunk doonk da da

Now I ain’t superstitious, but a black cat just crossed my train.

I’m warning you precious keep your snow seas away from me

White noise wrocking the backs of eyelids everywhere

Television quiz show hoping Toby from Arm cliff will win

$5000 dollarzz! A toby A.!

It’s a science question everybody knows!!

Source my receder-fading front to back

Almighty speckled seamstress

Why is your work coming undone?

All my otherness leaks

My gumboots are made in Poland

They keep me dry from Australian puddles

But soak my socks wet in sweat

Wouldn’t it be better to walk bare foot?

No no now, they’ll have you locked up

As Lilly says

You cannot divulge your in-sanity

To the out-sanity

Or they won’t let you go outside

No I ain’t superstitious but a black cat just crossed my trail

And I’m a dog

And I’m a goat
And I’m a fruitbooter

But I ain’t no cat

It is said the snow lynx can shape shift

Into other dimensions

But we had to wait for science to tell us

Before we could accepted it as white noise

But it didn’t, so we don’t listen yet again

The skin you’re in can carry your sins

And your notions of superstition there upon

But you cannot stop the universe crossing your trail

Da doonk doonk ba doonk ba doonk doonk ba doonk

~

In my performance work the attempt is made to dislocate consciousness from the physical world. By exerting pressure on the physical body with; endurance, the numbing of senses, chanting and repetitive movements, the body is exhausted to the point at which the mind can reach an almost unconscious mind frame and therefore provoke the sort of hypnotic state that occurs through meditation, ritualistic dance, intake of ethneogens and other such mind altering physical activities.

By being almost blinded, deafened, overheated and overworked, my surroundings begin to fade. The audience, the walls, the lights, the anxiety of performing seem to drop out of existence and the perpetual whirling of the echo of inner thought is triggered.
In two examples of my performance pieces; *Vlad Escapes* and *Husaria*, the costume or ‘armour’ is mostly made of cement, timber and bark. In the former, the hands, feet and chest are weighed down with these heavy materials. This is both symbolic and physically necessary for the attempt to divide inner and outer consciousness and to induce an altered state of mind. Merely the exertion it takes to step, move around and squat whilst orally bellowing repetitive chants is enough to lose one’s earthly inhibitions.

Whereas in *Husaria*, the strain comes not only from straight weightiness but also from balance or lack thereof. Towering overhead from the helm and upper back of the figure are two asymmetrical cumbersome wing-like structures. Loosely based on the 17th century Polish-Lithuanian cavalry, the ‘Husaria’ (or Hussars), who wore looming wings on their backs when going into battle as an intimidation tactic. The sheer height of the army (who were often outnumbered by their opponents) and the sound that hundreds of charging winged horsemen made, terrified the enemy and the cavalry remained undefeated for generations. This aesthetic coercion to the detriment of physical battle (the top heaviness proved to be clumsy in close range combat for the Hussars) intrigues me as this tactic aimed to alter the physical perceptions of the opponent, bending the reality on the battlefield. Similarly I feel that I am assuming the divide of my physical body and the spirit as opponents on the battlefield, I aim to confuse my physical being.

In this armour I meander the lines of the rooftop basketball court, where the performance was staged, on my rollerblades. Skating figure eights (infinite symbol), continual tight circles to swooping large circles, then drastically increasing speed and stopping just before I crash into the audience or the court parameters. The audio plays loudly, blaring into the court and off of the rooftop toward the Central Business District, the sound is a rhythmic rumbling drum, a throbbing base and reverberating swooping digital whistles, electronic yet primordial. Each turn or gust of wind at the same time straining my perception of balance and direction but swaying my head down and around
as if a lunge in a dance which increases the passion to skate faster and turn harder. The
heat on the rooftop under my padded cement helmet, leotard and rollerblades is almost
unbearable as my eyes fill with sweat. I can see very little, and my sense of direction is
almost non-existent, but I aim for the audience as they act as my decoy enemy.

Visually, both costumes appear simultaneously cumbersome and awkward but
with the illusion that perhaps the wearer might take flight, or at least some part of them.
Their soul? Their spine? Their sanity? Both have a symbolic valve to release this energy.
Embedded in the chest area of the Vlad costume is a red rubber meteor-like shape
protruding into the sky, surrounded by a white, gold and timber circle loosely resembling
the Taoist Taijitu (ying yang) symbol. In the case of the Hussar armour, a glass cut
spherical crystal is lodged atop the helmet as an emblematic nod to the pineal gland.

The physical movements of my limbs and body are inspired by the sacred
Gurdjieff Movements. G.I Gurdjieff was a mystic, philosopher and spiritual teacher of
sacred dances, which were a means of separating the mind-body consciousness in order
to wake from the stupor that is the ego. In his early years Gurdjieff, disenchanted after
his eager reading of scientific literature and influence of mainstream religions, extensively
travelled the world in a pursuit of truth. This curiosity led him to places across Central
Asia, Egypt, Iran, Tibet and Rome, where he spent his time immersing himself in the
teachings of Sufis, Fakirs, and yogis amongst other spiritual teachers. Upon returning to
Russia he wrote the book *Meetings with Remarkable Men* that was based on his teachings
throughout this journey. Disturbed by the loss of spirituality in the minds of the western
world and the realisation that the initial religions of the people had lost their meaning
and vitality, he began to develop a set of teachings to help the modern world develop
their relationships with the transcendental and interpersonal truths. One of the main
ways to provide his students with inner attention was through a language of sacred dance

or movements, which later became known as the Gurdjieff Movements. Gurdjieff developed thousands of postures and gestures, each representing a specific cosmic truth, which could be read like a book. A brief introduction to these movements is portrayed in the 1978 Film Meetings with Remarkable Men, which is based on Gurdjieff and his travels.27

Performance artists have often adopted the aesthetics and techniques of mysticism and spirituality to implement the duality of mind/body consciousness and have structured the relationship into languages of their own. Most famously perhaps was Joseph Beuys, using the trauma of a near death experience as a catalyst for his own shamanist methodologies and an unmistakeably Beysian language. By contrast artist Mary Beth Edelson used her body as a unification of individuals. Being a pioneer in feminist art in the 1960’s her ritualistic performances had the aura of occultist séances that were played out as a space empowering women, to go through a transformative process as an access to alternate realities.

Sydney based sound and performance artist Kusum Normoyle does not explicitly reference mysticism, but does however use extreme bodily endurance to distort the perception of her physical surroundings. She sees her performances as a “ramp that I escalate, irrelevant to my desire or active choice to do so… I need to disconnect from people’s faces in the room, people I know. Individuals become part of the environment. My eyes switch off and act simply as space-negotiation tools that take lead from my ears and body that are searching for and responding to sound vibrations.”28 With a barrage of loud phonetic vocalisations and exasperating screams, her energy furiously bounces about the typically concrete architectural settings and seems to shake their very foundations. This reverberation of physical surroundings is further emphasised by her digital manipulations of the performance documentation, which makes the walls,

27 Meetings with Remarkable Men, 1979, Motion Picture, directed by: Peter Brook
movements in the monastery - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtIYyjV9tsk
ground and rooftops seem as if they too are struggling to keep their perceptions in tact. In these digital manifestations of her performances Normoyle also incorporates the idea of glitches, on which I will be referring to in a later chapter.
“Slav Escapes”, 2016
Stone Villa wearable art prize, Sydney
“Hustaria”, 2017
Desire Lines, Sydney
Image: Jesse Mullins
still from: Meetings with Remarkable Men 1979, Motion Picture, directed by: Peter Brook
movements in the monastery - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qftYyjV9tsk

Joseph Beuys, I Like America and America Likes me
1974, photo: Caroline Tisdall
Rene Block Gallery, NY
Mary Beth Edelson, *Your 5000 Years are Up! Mourning our Lost Herstory*, 1977
marybethedelson.com

Earthly Depictions of The Crack and Through to the

Seamless Divine

Sulphryte demargous psyposis regardum
I'll be out following the waves
Of the triangular vestibule
Hard lifting from the soles
Of my feet
To the spectrum of my soul
In stories they sing of it a Stairway
How else to make the locked minded see
Than by wailing in the key of E
Hope climbing away from eternal misery
Flesh ladder flesh ladder
Fade us into the mist
Into infinite colour that doesn’t exist
Mathematics too impossibly precise
A cellophane hyper sound
Ripping from the underground
Cause causal there isn’t a cause
You're clumsy physics are forgotten here
The waves do not crash
Neurological crashes wave
Infract, 2016
pine, acrylic, steel, projector, glass

Divine Debris: Worshipping the Invisible, Demanding an Explanation
Firstdraft, Sydney
In a statement about my 2016 solo exhibition, *Divine Debris: Worshipping the Invisible, Demanding an Explanation*, at Firstdraft Gallery, I wrote:

“Grappling the relationships between the ego and the spirit by way of altered states of consciousness and poetic contemplations of the everyday. This exhibition is primarily concerned with the transcendental and the languages used as an attempt to explain or symbolise the divine.

*Divine Debris* is part of an ongoing intuitive development of a body of work consisting of physical manifestations or ‘poetic relics’ from both the personal and cultural transcendental realm. An observation on the way humans have intentionally attempted to represent the unexplainable, and the rituals through which we, unconsciously, by some evolutionarily force, strive to create and recreate this realm from the sediment of inherited cultural representation.

Upon considering an anthropological artefact, in a museum (particularly a religious or ritualistic relic), a certain anxiety for the future may stir the conscience.

*A kind of future that exists outside the notion of time.*

When entering a temple, mosque or church we see the intricate geometry, the vibrant colours and light amongst the heavy, time weathered stone. One may sense an uneasy feeling of connection to something akin to a computer program or virtual reality software. As if maybe these metaphors for the transcendental realm of the divine represent not only our pre human origins but also where we are beheading as a species into a virtual post-physical rhizomatic network of the Internet, or other such scientific advances, one anticipates the discovery of the realm of anti-matter.

*We worship the invisible.*

*But demand imagery and an explanation”*
Exhibition view: *Network* - rubber, cotton, gloss enamel
*Tenderiser* - wood, gloss enamel, imitation gold leaf
*Urn* - rosewood, steel, imitation gold leaf, dried chrysanthemum

2016
Firstdraft, Sydney
Exhibition view:
Firstdraft, Sydney
Knew One Well, Forgot How to Play, 2016
Cedar, various stones, imitation gold leaf, gloss enamel
Firstdraft, Sydney
In *Divine Debris* I wanted the space to pertain to an ambiguous ambiance with the air of something akin to an anthropological museum and to a place of worship and somewhat to a scientific laboratory. The triangular parameters of the gallery space gave a holy apex in which stood, *Infraet*, a tall triangular altarpiece signalling up toward a spinning mesmerising sphere of hallucinatory light refraction. This visual effect was created by a rear projection of spinning light and the contorted imagery of the objects in the room, which was refracted through a crystal ball to disperse the light on the whole surface of the sphere from within. On adjacent walls hung *One and Three Fates* a roughly squared off alignment of pine bark strips within which a square of slightly less rough matte white (with cracks filled in) framed a perfect circle of gloss white enamel. Indicating three stages of refinement. Many of my works adhere to this rule of thirds, the natural and the synthetically refined divided by a segment of metal leaf representing the passage or crack between paradise and foxhole.

Collecting found objects which may represent or be reminiscent of a crack in human perception of reality by the way they are shaped, their shine or their oddly ambiguous intentions, I assemble and ‘fix’ them in a way as to further obstruct their practicalities and original symbolisms into something which might have a soul unto itself or at least trigger one into a transcendental refrain. By manipulating the contexts by which we view these objects, I aim to destabilise their meanings further.

In some examples I take naturally occurring objects such as, tree trunks, bark, rocks, crystal formations, soil, then partially furnish them with surfaces and finishes that are representative of the human processes which attempt to elevate things to a perfected state, closer toward divinity. As if by transcending the forms of these basic materials we can in turn visualise transcending our mortal selves. These surfaces and finishes include filling the cracks and gaps, sealing and painting them in gloss white enamel, lacquering, gilding, refined glass, after they have been sanded and polished into smooth perfection.
These finishes are also traditionally used to preserve these raw, organic materials, which is somehow a denial of their ephemeral nature and assumptive of their vulnerability. Figuratively speaking humans have coated themselves in protective finishes to avoid, the potentially paralysing fear of death, the vulnerability of the body and the ego, and the insignificance of the individual, albeit in very disparate ways, namely either by faith or by material grandiosity.

The unembellished limbs of these earthy materials protruding their anthropogenically-refined modifications can be interpreted as an embodiment of the tumultuous and paradoxical relationship between transpersonal mindfulness and culturally constructed reasoning of self. I also employ prefabricated found objects of the everyday to further obscure this contemplation. If we conceive the human species as an animal on this planet, and our brains and flesh as biological constructs, then shouldn’t the tools, objects and refuse we create be a natural product also? Is this aspect of language, of separating ourselves from nature, a product of our inflated human-centric limitations of perceiving the world? Is our necessity to build churches, mosques, cathedrals and temples a way to prove to ourselves that we are closer to the divine then the animals? Or are we trying to create something more perfect than nature to make it easier to speculate some kind of perfection in afterlife? Places of worship in a majority of the world’s prominent religions are laden with treasures, surfaces of gold, polished marble and pearly whites, grand ceilings, intricate arches, millions of tiles, stained glass in an array of brilliant colours. Furthermore, spiritual constructions aside we can doubtlessly say that humans have always been obsessed with transcending nature. From fabricating hues of fantastic mauve to, busting the speed of sound to the erection of towering structures reaching for the heavens.
Control is Risen, 2016

various timbers, soil, glass, steel, bone, LED lights

Boże Drogi- My Dear Goodness, Interlude Gallery, Sydney
The DMT experience carries your mind into a realm that is largely incomparable with any notion of reality that we have as humans on planet earth. Linguistic expression does not suffice in attempts to try to explain it and the limited brain hasn’t the means to accurately store the complexity of the experience in its memory hard drive. Nevertheless the urge to explain, to yourself and others, what you can only remember as having witnessed the/an absolute truth is naturally incessant, at least for a period thereafter, until one comes to the realisation of the futility of such an endeavour.

Online Psychedelic message boards are rife with trip reports³⁹ and some groups of psychonauts and psychedelic scholars have even attempted to creatively map out this world by archiving the spaces and beings inhabiting them, from the collections of these reports. The problem is that when a person attempts to describe what they have gone through, to a person who hasn’t experienced the ‘Divine Moment of Truth’, the significance of it is instantly diluted by language and cultural context. Even to the individual themself who is still trying to piece together the infinite flood of information experienced in those few minutes.

You can somewhat liken this dilemma with someone attempting to explain their intense dreams to another. When you hear your colleague gasp to you - “Oh my god I had the weirdest dream last night!” you can pretty well assume you’re in for a dreary few minutes. Weirdness is the nature of dreams and although one can have their own mind shaken up proper, for a good while after dreaming, they can not accurately put forth the inner workings of their subconscious to another unless they are someone with whom they are deeply, spiritually and emotionally entwined.

With the effects of psychoactive substances, as with dreams, the nature of them is ‘weird’. Albeit the predicament is vastly more complex with DMT. Almost all who

³⁹ https://erowid.org/experiences/subs/exp_DMT.shtml viewed: 20.4.17
return from the experience\textsuperscript{30} assert that it was certainly not a hallucination or a dream or a figment of the imagination, this was a realm far more real than anything they’ve experienced through the eyes of their ego, their earthly avatar. They swear to have entered a hyperspace or a fourth dimension. And as shocking and mind opening the experience is, there is also a deep sense of having been there before and that eventually they will return. This is strikingly comparable to the Tibetan Buddhist teachings of the Bardo, which is the intermediate state between death and rebirth, when one’s consciousness is not connected with a physical body. The term Bardot is also sometimes used for the times when ordinary life is suspended and external limitations diminish such as with fever dreams or deep meditation\textsuperscript{31}.

After journeying into such depths of consciousness amongst the heirophanies that make up humanity’s mythologies. I felt the need to tie this experience to some epistemological milieu and upon reading into various religions, physics (meta-, quantum-, astro-), existentialist philosophies, psychology; they all made sense to me, in as much as they use their symbols of language and metaphors to attempt to explain beyond the boundaries of the mind but of course they all fall short of the experience itself (I guess this is why so many religions call on the faith to believe these stories). The holy trinity of Christianity, the bardo between reincarnation in Buddhism, the ineffable nature of the infinite god Allah in Islam, anti-matter and multiverses of quantum physics, the unconscious other in psychology. Terence McKenna has often said that our society, now more than ever, is going through a “balkanisation of epistemologies”\textsuperscript{32}. This can be likened to the collapse of the tower of babel, whereas much as we are not only divided into explaining the world around and beyond us by tongues, but also by various

\textsuperscript{31} ibid. pg. 82
\textsuperscript{32} https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ai1Los8lu2E viewed: 10.04.17
ontologies. McKenna frequently stressed the importance of the “felt presence of direct experience” as opposed to any dogma.³³

My hindrances in not feeling like I could designate my experience to one particular sect of doctrine led me back to art. For me art is the closest we can come to divulging the aesthetic of our metaphysical experiences. The natures of these experiences are so full of contradictions and irrationalities that by the same regard we must recreate these in the physical world with the same spontaneity, intuitive reckoning and calculated chaos. Of course we cannot escape the signs and signifiers of what we produce and how they are received but we certainly have the ability to scramble them in profound ways. The societal role of the artist is one of the only remaining mediums between these worlds that can respectfully exist in western society and not be diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, accused of cultism or religious fundamentalism. But given late 20th century’s cynicism hangover, even this right has hung by a thread.

Throughout history’s religions and spiritual tradition’s imagery representing the higher realm of the divine strikingly resemble the reports of the DMT realm. Some examples being The rainbow serpent, beings, spirits and infinite-like scapes in artworks of the indigenous Australian dreamtime; The sphere of nurturance, which embodies the essence of the sacred realm, within Tibetan and Hindu mandalas. And in Islam, which explicitly forbids representational art and idolatry (indicating perhaps the un-representable nature of the divine²), the art is dominated by geometrical patterns and continual reiterations of shapes to such a complexity and scale that it can bring one to mystical revelation.

Iranian born Artist Shirazeh Houshiary reflects these motifs in her sculptural work, which visually and conceptually draw parallels from the ideologies of Sufi doctrine, which is often referred to as ‘Islamic mysticism’ or the ‘inward dimension of Islam’.

Although these are just nods to those traditions, the interests leading to her work, both technically and poetically, span over many far reaching modes of understanding our existence. From the scientific, the cosmic, physics to renaissance painting and poetry, Houshiary conjures a mesmerizing whirling aesthetic that hints at all, but transcends an anchor to one.

“I set out to capture my breath, to find the essence of my own existence, transcending name, nationality, cultures.”

Shirazeh Houshiary, 1995, *Resonance* 120x120x36cm cast lead and gold leaf shirazehhoushiary.com viewed 20.04.17

34 As quoted in 2000, www.lissongallery.com/artists/shirazeh-houshiary
Swedish painter and mystic Hilma Af Klint was one of the pioneers of abstraction, predating the likes of Kandinsky. Despite this she remained largely unknown until the first public display of her work in 1986, around 40 years after her death. Although she can now be contextualised into the movement of abstraction, she worked without any contact with the renowned contemporaries of that movement. Af Klint was acquainted with people like Rudolf Steiner and Madame Blavatsky, two influential spiritual mystics who later went on to influence the surrealist and abstract impressionists, which undoubtedly would have conversed about the access into the spiritual realms. But her main point of contact was that place beyond space and time. Af Klint recorded the imagery of the spirit realms whilst in self-induced transpersonal states, reached through meditation and séances, immediately creating visual representations of these conversations with whom she called ‘High Masters’. The conversations she had with this
higher realm were often depicted with the symbolic use of triangular shapes coloured with the gradient of the light spectrum, leading to circles of bright light, through dark blocked in blacks. She wrote about how her hand was literally being guided by the invisible force of the high masters, who had assigned her to create these paintings for the ‘Temple’, although she never understood what was meant by temple.

“The pictures were painted directly through me, without any preliminary drawings, and with great force. I had no idea what the paintings were supposed to depict; nevertheless I worked swiftly and surely, without changing a single brush stroke.”

This symbolism of geometry and colour leading toward a bright light does recall somewhat, religious iconography of ascension and transcendence e.g. the stairway to heaven or a light at the end of the tunnel. And certainly resonates with my personal rupture into some neurological ladder into a perfect hyper reality.

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35 Af Klint, H, as quoted in Painting for a Temple by Iris Müller-Westermann modernamuseet.se/stockholm/en/exhibitions/hilma-af-klint-2/topics/ viewed: 10.02.17
Hilma Af Klimt, *Alterbild*, 1915
Paper, tempura. 152 x 185cm
Moderna Museet/Albin Dahlström
James Lee Byars was an artist commonly regarded as being obsessed with perfection\textsuperscript{36}. Shape, fineness, minimalism, temporality and scope, co-existing in a poetic revelry was to be his principal formula for attempting to mark a divinely seamless and ephemeral impression onto this world. Byars’ sculptural installations would often consist of large polished spheres and circles, symbolic of the eternal return, a meditation on the perpetual nature of the shape, which to him seemed to rhythmically reflect minimalist purity. These grand, foreboding and unflinchingly confident, forms, were usually made from age old sculpting materials such as brass, marble, wood and were often gilded in the light, fragile but precious white gold-leaf. The presence of Byars’ work, and of the artist himself, emanates the undulating spirit of a fleeting occurrence bridging into the eternal. The forms, like apparitions in a hallway, float in a certain uncertainty, at once ominously exhaling an air of sublime grandeur though calling one back into some familiar celestial womb.

“Byars approaches art as though it had not existed prior to him. Taken as a fundamental aesthetic category, distinct from all tangible reality, perfection signals itself as an exception in the nameless gap that separates desire from its cause – like Venus, perfection will be banned from the world precisely because it symbolizes only absence, because it is always on the brink of dismissal, is never really functional. Perfection, like Spinoza’s truth, is revealed in the way the subject misses it. It occurs only insofar as the artist signifies it, effacing it the very moment it appears. That is why the sole manifestation of perfection is its very abolition. And that is where Byar’s art, in ridding itself of this impossibility, seeks its recourse and its contours.”\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{36} Elliot, J (editor), 1990. \textit{The Perfect Thought: An Exhibition of Works by James Lee Byars}, The Regents of the University of California, Ca.
Byars attempts to free the gallery space of the memory of its institutional functionality, adorning the walls, with fabrics like silk that seem to waft dimensionality into a poetic revelry, or with the rare material of gold which holds much cultural significance, referring to the alchemical processes of a base metamorphosing to a noble substance, “…[a] brute material rising to the status of spiritual abstraction”\textsuperscript{38}. Byars’ appears to free the space of utilitarian conventions in an effort to apply a personal aesthetic of poetic contradictions, that of birth and death, permanence and temporality, excessiveness and Zen minimalism.

“This is the dramatic aspect of artistic creativity, which does not respond to demand or social need but rather that affirms and imposes a new and different reality of vision that destroys all possible memory of equivalents or duplications as expressed through language… He sets to work with an initial sense of destructiveness then fills the void with a tangible expression of his sense of form”\textsuperscript{39}

![James Lee Byars, “Monument to Language”, 1995 Polished bronze with gold-leaf, 300cm diameter Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain, Paris](image)

\textsuperscript{38} Oliva, A B, 1990. The Perfect Thought: An Exhibition of Works by James Lee Byars- Gold is only the beginning of art: The art of painting, The Regents of the University of California, Ca. p.g.65.

\textsuperscript{39} ibid.
James Lee Byars, *Sphere is a Sphere is a Sphere is a Sphere*  
Installation view: 2016, Peder Lund, Oslo

Szymon Dorabialski,  
“Divine Debris”, 2016. (Promotional image)  
Firstdraft, Sydney
Szymon Dorabialski, “Afscend”, 2016
wood, steel, cement, glass, 20 x 20 x 30 cm.
for “Divine Debris” Firstdraft, Sydney
Cracks or Glitches? : Our Dimension as Simulation.

Nothing but shimmering water

On the parameters

I slide towards

A conflation of reverberations

Spits me back into eye

I fly scorpion toed

Toward endless grace

A crack of neural lighting

Puts me back in my place

I steal a machine

Try to hack out from within

Screensaver says

Stealing’s a sin

Stealing’s a sin

Who pressing punch for me

Who can see the radials round me?

Who can pause me

Totem poles point

To the lounge room of lords

Pond holes want

To out-deepen the abyss

Sermons hissing

Idolotite screams
Pixelated wreaths
Lay at clumsy feet
Remains are just that
Remains of this frame
The rest got across
Those Parabola waters

~

In the weeks following my D.M.T trip, I wandered a lot, walking streets, parks, bush and catching trains to random destinations. An incessant and overwhelming feeling that the constructs of the world and the people on it seemed horribly clumsy, primitive, and basic, hounded me. As if the quarks and atoms that this universe were lumped together with weren’t that small and precise after all. I didn’t believe the grass as it swayed in the wind, it was like all the blades were acting, simply performing their function. As with the sunlight, which was hitting the grass from a big old angle, as if a child had ruled it up in a primary school mathematics textbook. People seemed to walk and move around spaces as if they were programmed to look indifferent yet busy. And myself moving amongst them felt like I was pretending to be human, I knew how to do all the motions but I too felt like I was acting. I wondered if people could tell. Was I playing the part convincingly?

I would look at dogs and wonder, what if that dog was given the capacity to see colour and question its own existence, in the way humans do, for ten minutes only? How distressed would the dog be, having to come back to its particular type of limited perceptive functions? Would it take back anything from its experience? Would he be struck with the depressing thought that he was living a lie? Although this would not
exactly compare to my predicament as the dog and I at least live on the same dimension, at least as far as I can tell.

“If you get into these spaces [non-ordinary states of consciousness] at all, you must forget about them when you come back. You must forget you're omnipotent and omniscient and take the game seriously so you'll engage in sex, have children, and participate in the whole human scenario. When you come back from a deep tank session — or a coma or psychosis — there's always this extraterrestrial feeling. You have to read the directions in the glove compartment so you can run the human vehicle once more.”

I was never a person that played many video games, though I grew up in a generation surrounded by colleagues who did. And as I roamed about I could not help but constantly compare my current humanoid existence to a video game. As if the earth had been programmed as an experiment or a game, which has been evolving from its early pixelated stages of Mesozoic era of gigantic blocky dinosaurs and colossal trees to the seemingly sleek rhizomatic era of the Internet and glass skyscrapers. An evolution that I saw akin to the development of video games from the beginning of when humans began to digitally mimic their environment with the power to control it; from “Pong” to “Grand Theft Auto”. I particularly felt this sentiment from certain elementary phenomena, that I later learnt where some of the hardest things to program into a reality simulation. I.e. rippling water, fire and the refraction of light.

41 1972, “Pong”, Video game, Atari
42 2013 (latest release), “Grand Theft Auto”, Video game series, Rockstar Games, NY
Atari Video Game, *White Rabbit* 1984

Multi-Platform video game: *watch_dogs*, 2014
Ubisoft
“Many works of science fiction as well as some forecasts by serious technologists and futurologists predict that enormous amounts of computing power will be available in the future. Let us suppose for a moment that these predictions are correct. One thing that later generations might do with their super-powerful computers is run detailed simulations of their forebears or of people like their forebears. Because their computers would be so powerful, they could run a great many such simulations. Suppose that these simulated people are conscious (as they would be if the simulations were sufficiently fine-grained and if a certain quite widely accepted position in the philosophy of mind is correct). Then it could be the case that the vast majority of minds like ours do not belong to the original race but rather to people simulated by the advanced descendants of an original race. It is then possible to argue that, if this were the case, we would be rational to think that we are likely among the simulated minds rather than among the original biological ones. Therefore, if we don’t think that we are currently living in a computer simulation, we are not entitled to believe that we will have descendants who will run lots of such simulations of their forebears.”

Philosopher Nick Bostrom in 2003 proposed (in are you living in a computer simulation) that it is a highly probable prospect that our current universe, which we call ‘reality’, is a simulation that humans or an advanced version of humans, have programmed. The idea that we are living in a computer simulated universe is not a new one, science-fiction authors such as Kurt Vonnegut\textsuperscript{44}, Douglas Adams\textsuperscript{45}, Stanisław Lem\textsuperscript{46} and Philip K Dick\textsuperscript{47} wrote about this concept throughout the 20th century, as too with

\textsuperscript{44} Vonnegut, K, 1973. Breakfast of Champions, Delacorte Press, U.S.
\textsuperscript{46} Lem, S, 1965. The Seventh Sally, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Pl
\textsuperscript{47} 1 e.g. Dick, P.K, 1957, “Eye in the Sky”, Ace Books. NY.
many non fiction writers such as Hans Moravec\textsuperscript{48}, John C Lilly\textsuperscript{49} and David Deutsch. Thanks to Bostrom’s theory the topic has gained much ground in the scientific community in recent years, leading astrophysicists and cosmologists such as George Smoot, Max Tegmark, James Gates, Neil Degrassi Tyson\textsuperscript{50} are debating these notions with new observational evidences and estimations arising rapidly with new technologies. Smoot mentions a discussion he had with a leading Google expert who had told him that Google will be uploading entire minds to computers by 2045\textsuperscript{51}.

These concepts, if they were to be confirmed by science would propose that the last 200 years of Newtonian physics have been a sort of dark age for perceiving the physical universe as the center and absolute of our understanding and would suggest that scriptures of many religions (e.g. Islam and Christianity) that speak of the ‘grand design’ of our universe by a creator might be a more appropriate metaphor for our existence as humans when considering us as simulated beings with a limited understanding of our “purpose” and “roles” compared to those who play us like a game or watch over us as a simulation the same way avatars in our video games are unaware of who is controlling them as they are not programmed to know the technological programming behind their own “reality” let alone the reality of their creator.

What's more, theoretical discoveries in quantum physics, with string theory and the idea of multiverses are also suggestive of the idea of our universe being akin to something like our video games and computer programs, in that the same program is used by many simultaneously and so alternate versions of each and every aspect are likely

\textsuperscript{50} 2016, Isaaz Asimov Debate, American Museum of Natural History. www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgSZA3NPpBs viewed 20.04.17
\textsuperscript{51} Smoot, G, 2014. \textit{You are a Simulation & Physics Can Prove It}, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Chfoo9NBcow viewed 20.04.17
to exist. David Deutsch in his book, *The Beginning of Infinity*, speaks of this ‘many-worlds interpretation’ but unlike some of the other hardline empirical rationalist astrophysicists I mentioned earlier, Deutsch stresses the importance of the creative mind. He states that any imagined perspective that is observed in a creative mind on our universe is likely to be fact somewhere in the multi-verse. Deutsch asserts that our pool of knowledge in imagination is much greater than our brute computational power, and lack of creativity is why the progress of many scientific discoveries is delayed (he uses the delays in AI as an example). He claims that the enlightenment of the 19th century set off the sequence of infinite knowledge where original thought was no longer held back by a ‘static society’. With the creative visionaries putting forth ideas to be critiqued and scrutinized, the ones that are hard to falsify naturally stand the test of time and are liable to become realities. This claim seems to be quite evident now looking back at the science fiction authors of the 19th century (some of which I mentioned earlier). Maybe no one is wrong about anything. Maybe we all play our roles in a collective evolution that we cannot see as individuals. Maybe the fact that these fantastical fictions where contrived is why they are being speculated now in science, Not as a prophecy but as a catalyst.

“If you’re finding IT solutions to your problems, maybe it’s just the fad of the moment… Kind of like if you’re a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.”

“You’re not going to get proof that we’re not in a simulation, because any evidence that we get could be simulated,”

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52 Deutsch, D, 2011. *The Beginning of Infinity*, Allen Lane, UK
54 Chalmers D, Professor of Philosophy at New York University. Ibid.
My *Glitchwork* series was an experimentation of multi-layered processes of perception with the consideration of our universe as simulation. In this process I would take a poor quality digital SLR camera into the places I had wandered about when I felt that strong sense of living amongst a simulation one-year prior. And attempt to relive those sensations that made me doubt the sincerity of my surroundings, but this time through the lens of a digital viewing device. This sounds like a very convoluted way of saying ‘I went out and filmed some environments’; but the process for me had a deeply conceptual and therapeutic effect. As I felt I was taking one step back further and although I did not get that same shudder of the falsity of my flesh and surroundings, I did during the process of filming, experience incredible synchronicities\(^5\), akin to a period when I was rigorously practicing lucid dreaming techniques. Whereupon I had the disconcerting feeling that I was directly involved in the playing out of my surroundings (in the awake state as well as in dreams), the people I bumped into, the street signs that spelled themselves out to me, the numbers on a mailbox, the ramblings of street drunk, as if I had orchestrated them or as if they had been playing out for me. When filming in a park in a particular type of twilight, the kind that seems to reveal the blades of grass as thespians, I saw an unaccompanied red dog bound from over the horizon, from the top of the hill and run straight down into frame of the patch of grass that I was filming a meter away from me. Seemingly unaware of me it proceed to urinate in frame, allowing the sunlight to gleam off of the grass ever more theatrically. The dog did a few poses for me than sprang back up and over the horizon as quickly as it had come. Later, When filming a stream with crystal water, which if you squint the right way the ripples seem to be pixelated, two local boys with gumboots on, come strolling through the waters. This was in the mountains, a sparsely populated stream to say the least. Upon re-watching some of this footage on my dated laptop I had decided to film the screen with the same

camera I had shot the footage on. The media player was doing something I had not seen it do on that laptop; it had started to glitch furiously. I paired the glitch footage with the music of *The Master Musicians of Joujouka*. Of course this was a very reasonable glitch within technology and although the synchronicity of it happening, while I was thinking about glitches during their creation, felt meaningful to me, it means nothing to anyone but me the individual. A glitch in reality would be the real signs of us living in a simulation, but then what can we legitimately take as glitches in reality? Paranormal activity? Levitation? Apparitions? Anti-matter? The “double-slit experiment”? Spinning celestial chrysanthemums? Synchronicities? Visions of god? DMT?

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56 A Moroccan Sufi Brotherhood whose trance inducing music has been passed down for generations for 4000 years. They gained recognition in the western world through William S Burroughs who frequented Morocco (or as he refers to it as ‘Interzone’ in drug filled stupors. “Tails of Joujouka” 1975, Capra Press, CA
“Glitchwork”, 2015
series, lo-fi video
Reconciling with the Crack

Of everything to be
Is relieved and meant
Of nothing is to be
Is relieved and meant
Same distance
Far engrossed
Swaying is the way
Nurture the reeds
Device driven
Splitting the way
e-optic send cosmos
But what will sh3 gather?
Red reeds and leaven
Attaining to tents
Driving to back up
Eventually we return
Ultimately we go
Everything is relieved
To be and meant
Nothing is relieved
To be and meant
A common idiom we can attach to most of our anxieties and fears is ‘the fear of the unknown’. Cracks are associated with the result of unforeseeable and undesirable circumstances. What we can deduce of what lies beyond them is limited. In the wake of many of my most profound explorations into transcendental realms I was left with the echoing mantra ‘I believe in nothing, I believe in everything’. I am aware of the fact that in this paper I have made some sweeping generalisations about god, science and existence, which may at times seem contradictory, problematic or just skim the shallows of an infinite void. I am also aware of the futility of discussing such topics within a restricted rational framework. Although, in the process, I have also further convinced myself of the necessity of approaching such complications with unbridled imagination and intuition, when considering myself as ‘artist’. In the era of the Internet, with its rhizomatic\textsuperscript{58} structure for distributing information, it seems inevitable that the human animal will gage it’s theological bearings through a process of hermeneutical cherry picking. It might be the case that humans will never be able to understand the unknowable. Maybe it is programmed within human nature to invent a liminal unknowable. The crack has certainly manifested itself in a plethora of ways for tens of thousand of years.

Psychedelics are making a positive resurgence in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century and it is sparking a growing spiritually minded generation who don’t tie themselves to any religious ideologies. There are emerging associations in the U.S such as, \textit{Psymposia}\textsuperscript{59} a media group dedicated to sharing of psychedelic knowledge and \textit{Psychedemia} from the University of Pennsylvania which hold increasingly popular conferences as a means of “integrating psychedelics in academia”\textsuperscript{60}, into the fields of psychology, literature,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[58] I use this as a reference to Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘Rhizome’, being a non-hierarchical distribution of data and information, allowing for multiple entry and exit points, as opposed to the linear growth structure of a tree. Deleuze G and Guattari, 1987 (o.1980). \textit{A Thousand Plateaus}, University of Minnesota Press
\item[59] www.psymposia.com/viewed: 15.04.17
\item[60] psychedemia.org/viewed: 15.04.17
\end{footnotes}
neurochemistry and medicine. People such as Neşe Devenot, PhD, are advocating for psychedelic rhetoric to reach public consensus. Devenot’s progressive ideas include “The Role of Poetic Language in Psychedelic Science Research” and “Coming Out of the Psychedelic Closet.” This is still largely undiscovered territory given the setbacks of the second half of the 20th century. But the steady flow of positive articles on psychopharmacology and the potential healing properties of entheogens, in recognised scientific journals, seems to be an optimistic development. Again this seems to be having an effect on the art world, with some theorists proposing the movement of Metamodernism. Which encapsulates a new generation that is balancing “ironic detachment with sincere engagement.” Some artists (and filmmakers) who fall into this category (although not all of them identify with the term) include; Miranda July, Wes Anderson, Rebecca Partridge, Carol Bove and Guido van der Werve, all characterised by their romantic sensibilities though not void of a certain idiosyncratic pragmatism. Subverting postmodern cynicism into a new wave of liminal romantics, peering into unknowns and relating them to the everyday.

Perhaps in order to be able to value our constant breaches into the unknown realms of the human mind, and rejoice the poignant yet undefinable nature of entering such extra ordinary states, it would do us well to consider ‘Kintsugi’. The age-old tradition in Japanese ceramics of Kintsugi (“golden joinery”) is a method for repairing broken pottery by filling its cracks with gold. The philosophy behind this is to, rather than attempt to conceal the history of its misfortune, highlight it’s life as an object.

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64 Metamodernist // manifesto. www.metamodernism.org/
“Not only is there no attempt to hide the damage, but the repair is literally illuminated... a kind of physical expression of the spirit of Mushin.... Mushin is often literally translated as “no mind,” but carries connotations of fully existing within the moment, of non-attachment, of equanimity amid changing conditions. ...The vicissitudes of existence over time, to which all humans are susceptible, could not be clearer than in the breaks, the knocks, and the shattering to which ceramic ware too is subject. This poignancy or aesthetic of existence has been known in Japan as mono no aware, a compassionate sensitivity, or perhaps identification with, [things] outside oneself.”

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Szymon Dorabialski, *Wandering Artist*, 2016
Interlude Gallery, Sydney
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