ALTAR STATES:
SPIRIT WORLDS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCES

A Project

by

Peter Treagan

Summer 2019

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the future ancestors living in harmony with Nature.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am forever grateful for my committee and family; your endless patience and support made all of this possible. Many thanks to the Idea Fab Labs for providing 24-hour access to the facility, training with the high-tech tools, and the creative space for unexpected collaborations throughout the process. Thank you to the MFA Gallery and Museum of Anthropology at CSU Chico for the opportunity to exhibit my work to the public and making the vision a reality. Special thanks to the talented musicians who contributed original compositions to the Altar States soundscape: Chelu de la Isla, The Sámi Brothers, Flow State, GeOMetrae, Anahata Sacred Sound Current, Puka, and Shimshai & Susana. For the inspiration and encouragement to create and share this artwork, infinite thanks to Chances R Good, Makhno Mata, Alfredo Zagaceta, Juan Carlos Taminchi, Michael Divine, and Alex & Allyson Grey. Most of all, I give thanks to the everywhere Spirit for all of the experiences and growth on this journey. Thank you.
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**MASTER’S EXHIBITION**

VALENE L. SMITH MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY, CSU CHICO, CALIFORNIA

SUMMER 2019

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ABSTRACT

ALTAR STATES:
SPIRIT WORLDS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCES

by

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Master of Arts in Social Science
California State University, Chico
Summer 2019

*Altar States: Spirit Worlds and Transformational Experiences*, publicly displayed during the Vernal Equinox at Valene L. Smith Museum of Anthropology at CSU Chico in California, is an interactive tech-art exhibition that features visionary imagery, illuminated sculptures, and a 24-minute soundscape journey. The installation explores themes of symbolism, interconnectedness, cross-pollination, worldview paradigm shift, and transformation. The written portion of the Master’s project maps a multidisciplinary investigation of Transformational Festival culture through ethnographic fieldwork in North, Central, and South America. Visionary art is a portal into the visual feeling of presence from the artist to the viewer. The conceptual seed of *Altar States* originated with the intention to create a container for the transmission of the visionary experience. The installation, set within a cycling 24-minute day/night soundscape, draws upon polarities in the *Light of Day* with stereoscopic 3D glasses and in the *Light of Night* under UV blacklights, attempting to evoke new perspectives in the viewer. By exploring the intersection between art and technology, within the context of exhibition, *Altar States* intends to bridge ancient and futuristic, secular and sacred, imaginary and experiential.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Project

Immersion in the Field: Notes from Symb10sis
Gathering: Re:Union, September 2014

Smoke rises from incense and the smudging of sacred sage, gently carried by a cool breeze throughout the campgrounds. The sweet smells mix with herbs and tobacco originating from behind tapestries of mandalas, intricate tessellations and brightly colored, flowing cloths. Something else is in the air, intangible, sparkling like electricity. This ineffable buzz is felt radiating a magnetic pulse throughout the Woodward Reservoir, an expansive regional park located a couple hours east of the Bay Area near Oakdale, California where the 10 year anniversary of Symbiosis Gatherings is about to officially begin.

Coinciding with the Autumnal Equinox, the 5-day Transformational Festival Symb10sis Gathering: Re:Union remains true to tradition of holding the celebrations during celestial events. The energy has been building and with two years since the last event hopes are high for an otherworldly experience beyond the limits of imagination. Unofficially Symbiosis 2015 is already in full swing. The festival returns with another year of Elemental Alchemy, three concurrently running immersive workshops called Permaculture Immersive, Visionary Art Immersive, and Yoga Immersive, that are hosted on site for the five days leading up to the official Opening Ceremony.

The landscape of the reservoir is an estuary teeming with birdlife and surrounded by meadows, a freshwater oasis. Trees line the shores of an amorphous five-
fingered peninsula, which is the center of the festival. Shade in the main campgrounds is sparse, save for a few old trees standing alone like sentinels posted across the landscape. The rolling hills of golden grass merge into a sea of thousands of tents and canopies, coalescing into a makeshift shantytown on the outskirts of the peninsula.

One may as well be travelling light years through the galaxy to arrive at the festival entrance of Symbiosis, navigating through a labyrinth of dusty pathways, each with signposts for interplanetary orbits in the solar system, with the main vein dubbed the “Milky Way.” Vibrant nebula star cluster encampments stretch across the festival space like the constellations and celestial bodies that the camping areas are named after, such as Sagittarius, Lyra, Andromeda, Pegasus, Cassiopeia, and Aquarius. Fleets of wanderlust cosmonauts stream in every direction, avoiding other bicycle riding “festies” that occasionally zoom by like a flaming comet from deep space.

Alchemy Village, a space dedicated to transformations of mind, body and spirit, serves as the gateway to Symbiosis. It is situated on a narrow strip of land with water on both sides that leads into the five-fingered peninsula and the main festival area. Immediately one arrives at the proverbial watering hole, a communal water fountain next to the Zendo Lounge and the Oasis Spa. Oasis is an elegant mobile bathhouse with bamboo floors and colorful curtains offering hot showers, sauna heated by woodstove, and therapeutic massage. The Zendo Lounge is devoted to psychedelic harm reduction with a supportive environment of trained counselors and a comfortable, calming Zen setting. Just another step into Alchemy Village reveals the geometric Reception structure and The Courtyard: Giggle Juice complete with bohemian 5-course menu, sunset dining
reservations and rooftop views of the entire festival. Behind Reception bright silk scarves dangle from two towering trees where impromptu lessons are given on aerial acrobatics.

Central within the Village is the Alchemy Stage, a space devoted to educational and crafts workshops as well as movement arts such as yoga and chi gong. At the entrance a massive dreamcatcher hangs from the ceiling to the ground. Nearby is the Calibration Station, a cosmic dome offering a clear zone for alignment and attunement, featuring expertly orchestrated sound bath healing music and vibrational tones. Looking in 360 degrees around the dome, one is immersed in the Visionary Art of Michael Divine of 10,000 Visions and the Amazonian shaman Luis Tamani. The mystical “higher-level” masterpieces give viewers the “download” as they are whisked away into a multidimensional realm that cameras cannot go.

Along the shoreline after the Oasis Spa is the Nourishment Lab, Niuka Tea Clinic, Healing Camp, Placemakers Tea House, Ancestral Arts Zone, and the Permaculture Action Hub. The Nourishment Lab hosts cooking classes, demonstrations, and workshops on health and superfoods. The recipe of the workshops’ presentations cook up a familiar flavor, a blend of homemade in the kitchen and a Food Network show. They cover anything from advanced blender skills, sprouting, making nut milk, kombucha, tantric cacao recipes, and aphrodisiacs. On either sidewall are other health offerings. On the right-hand side, next to superfood turmeric dietary supplements, at the center of an altar adorned with crystals and flowers, rests a large glass water dispenser filled with ionized alkaline water charged through electrolysis from Kangen water filtration technology. On the left is the Niuka Tea Clinic providing adaptogenic herbal
formulas and elixirs, as well as integrative medicine treatments and traditional tea ceremony of high-end puerhs, oolongs, white and green teas.

Within the Alchemy Village is a distinctive area called the Permaculture Action Hub created around an ethic described as Earth care, people care, and fair share. This space also encompasses The Placemakers Tea House and the Ancestral Arts Zone. The Placemakers Tea House is known as the living room of Alchemy Village, a space to chill out, enjoy traditional tea ceremony, and engage in dialogue around placemaking, a community art form of permaculture activism. In addition to showcasing traditional artisan crafts created by indigenous tribal members hosting the space, the Ancestral Arts Zone also offers workshops and skill-shares on primitive skills such as firecraft, traditional Miwok basket weaving, traditional acorn processing and cooking with hot rocks, dreamcatchers, medicine bags, and cordage, the ancient art of making plant or animal fibers into rope.

The Permaculture Action Hub is the center of sustainability at Symbiosis, hosting skill-shares, teach-ins, hands-on workshops, and panel discussions throughout the daytime hours. Topics include issues focused on social change and of course permaculture, which can range from building resilient communities, eco-villages, and de-colonization to nutrient cycling soils, planting by the phases of the moon, harvesting waste water, and edible forest garden design. Workshops and panel discussions are held under a curvaceous star shaped beige canvas canopy where participants sit on concentric horseshoe rows of hay bales. Aesthetic and edible plants surround the Permaculture Action Hub, with a number of structures in the open air that are on display for the demonstration of green principles in action. At the entrance to the Permaculture Action
Hub are three solar cookers collecting sunlight to slowly bake potatoes and other vegetables. Also positioned in direct sunlight, an all-black passive-solar device is propped up at an angle to optimally collect thermal energy and circulate the heated water. An oven created from the ancient building material of adobe, or cob, shaped like a ziggurat or Mayan step pyramid, is nearby an adobe bench that rests under a shady tree. The mass of the bench is filled with Ecobricks, or plastic water bottles compacted with trash, an innovative green solution invented to “upcycle” waste materials that may otherwise end up in a landfill or the ocean.

Healing Camp is a holistic hive of open-air tents where individuals can book sessions with expert therapists and healers. The health and wellness offerings are abundant and range from Western and Vedic Astrology, Human Design and Ayurvedic consultations to Theta, Reiki, and Tantra Chant Healing to acupuncture and yoga therapy. The extensive massage modalities include Ayurvedic, Swedish, Thai, Maya abdominal, deep tissue, craniosacral, Shiatsu, Lomi Lomi, and pregnancy massage, to name a few. The soothing sounds of gongs, bells, Tibetan Singing Bowls, rawhide frame drums, rattles, and pan flutes merge with the breeze and the ebb and flow of gentle waves playing on the shores of the reservoir.

The heart of Symbiosis is vibrant, alive with sights, sounds and sensations as the afternoon sun beats down like a drum. Countless festivalgoers trod dusty paths that lead into the center, causing billowing clouds of dust to dance in rays of light, like a great migration of buffalo. Eager to join in the Opening Ceremony hundreds of people gather at the center of Symb10sis Gathering: Re:Union in an expansive circle at the edge of the water, the sacred space Elemental Altars.
The area is surrounded externally on all sides by interactive art installations, some imported the week prior from Burning Man, including a telephone booth with the official logo “Talk To God”, a neon color-changing “Allsphere”, a gigantic metallic sculpture of tentacle pipes connecting up to an orb crow’s nest of interlocking rings, and enterable multifaceted origami polyhedrons, radiating a golden inner glow and illuminating the space through geometric filigrees like futuristic lampshade mosaics.

Opposite Elemental Altars, eastward across a dusty path through the peninsula’s bottleneck, are four enormous geodesic domes with colored fabric stretched between the triangular bars. One of the domes is a part of Kidzbiosis Dream Village, a creative zone for children to engage in “Playshops”, cultivate self-love, have fun and express themselves freely under the adult encouragement and guidance of the Natural Leaders Foundation. Nearby on a low hill is the colossal Art Gallery dome displaying the inspiring masterpieces of Visionary artists. The other two domes together comprise the Movement Shala, spaces dedicated to yoga, tai chi and dance.

On the other side of Elemental Altars, looking west from the shore across the water is the Empire of Love, Swimbiosis, and The Hub. The Empire of Love is a collection of elaborate shrines artistically created through repurposed, revitalized and reclaimed “waste” such as scrap wood, cans and bottle caps. Persian rugs compliment the bold painted patterns on the walls, creating an exotic atmosphere. Swimbiosis is a beachfront stage that opens up to the water where shaded lounge areas are built on stilts. Just above the water’s surface mesh slack line straps are crisscrossed and half submerged for a cool and kicked-back water sofa. On the next level shaded platforms are perched for a view of the party, a bit of Goa and a splash of Ibiza. Just inland, perfectly between the
Empire of Love and Swimbiosis, The Hub stands out as a grand circular circus tent with palatial spires reaching for the heavens. During the day The Hub hosts workshops and panel discussions on a multitude of topics and at night it transforms into a participatory theatrical experience with a gameshow, musicals in 3D, karaoke, sketch and comedy, alongside wild and expressive performances.

At the center of the festival, Elemental Altars is the place to honor the elements in a sacred way. These spaces are intended to transcend dogma and religion so people of all lineages and traditions can universally celebrate the natural elements, the foundations of life. Giving reverence to the essence of the four elements through recognition of the Elementals as holy beings, the Elementals are welcomed as living participants in ceremony and in life.

The Elemental Altars space is enclosed inside of a thin bamboo fence with several awe-inspiring gates. Within are the ornate temples and altars of the elements Earth, Water, Fire and Air. The gates and altar spaces of the elements are crafted with visionary aesthetics. Their pyramidal temple structures have a singular high peak, some adorned in the center with detailed wooden geometric mandalas, and several lower asymmetrical peaks. Constructed primarily of wood, the pyramids are meticulously decorated with interlacing vortices of intricate latticework and vibrant, semi-transparent cloth that are color-coded for each element. During the golden hour of the day and when lit up at night the cloths give the temples of Symbiosis a mystical aura.

Symbiosis Gatherings has a tradition of building relationships with the “People of the Place” to respect the ancestral land and ways of indigenous people where the festival is held. The 10th anniversary is on the ancestral land of the Central Sierra
Miwok tribe who has the honor to conduct the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the festival. It is also tradition for the indigenous leaders and elders of diverse lineages from other Symbiosis communities to make offerings to the “People of the Place”, this year the Miwok people, from their own traditions. Among those present were members of the Paiute Tribe community from Pyramid Lake, Nevada, where Symbiosis Gatherings was held for the Annular Eclipse in 2012.

From the inception of the Opening Ceremony to the final Closing Ceremony, an invitation is given to the gathering to join each day for elemental offerings, prayers and meditations. Each morning there are Water Blessings rituals at the Community Fountain, a Sunset Fire Ceremony each day when the Sacred Fire is lit, and at various times throughout the gathering Air Temple Sound Meditations are held. The offerings and traditional invocations at Elemental Altars set the ceremonial container for the entire gathering, encompassing five days full of workshops, art, an eclectic bass-heavy lineup, world music infusions, dance, play, community and connection.

Purpose and Scope of the Project

*Altar States* is an interactive tech-art exhibit showcasing the cross-pollination of the visionary experience and ancestral worldviews within the global movement of Transformational Festival culture. I draw upon themes of symbolism, cross-pollination, interconnectedness, and transformation to explore inner landscapes and otherworldly vistas. These are my dreams and visions. The concept, design, craft, installation, and exhibition of *Altar States* is an original solution to the Social Science Master’s Project based on ethnographic field research at Transformational Festivals in North, Central, and South America.
Altar States also explores the intersection between art and technology. By using high-tech tools such as a laser cutter, 3D printer, ceramic 3D printer, (CNC) computerized router for robotic carving, combined with handcraft and traditional art techniques, Altar States aims to bridge ancient and futuristic, secular and sacred, imaginary and experiential.

The concept and inspiration for this project came about while directing a documentary on makerspaces called A Bright Idea. Makerspaces are creative and collaborative spaces where innovative, high-tech, and large-scale Visionary art installations are often created. In the big picture of this ethnography, the film served as background research on an aspect of Visionary art culture that takes place outside of Transformational Festivals. The possibility of disseminating ethnographic research visually through film was very inspiring and sparked the idea to disseminate my findings in the form of an interactive art exhibition. Following an initial exploratory period to learn how to use the high-tech tools and develop rapid prototypes, I was accepted into the Tech-Art Incubator Program at the Idea Fab Labs in Chico, CA to complete the project between fall 2017 and spring 2018.

Everyday for the 30 days leading up to the pilot exhibition on the Vernal Equinox 2018 I worked at the Fab Lab throughout the night and rested no more than three hours per day. This workflow and rhythm was spontaneous and by listening to my body I also discovered the practice of intermittent fasting. By paying more attention, I discovered new ways to ride the waves of creativity and stay in a flow state. In this process, I entered various altered states of consciousness and channeled creative energy into the artwork.
As an immersive multisensory environment, this project is tailored to represent what Transformational Festival visionaries intend to create in their own events: a “container” that holds the space for peak transformational experience. There also exists a parallel intention and purpose in the container created for certain ceremonies and community rituals: liminality. In anthropology, liminality is understood as a threshold stage in a rite of passage. *Altar States* takes place in a 24-minute day/night cycle rather than a 24-hour day/night-long or a multiple days/nights-long transformational experience. In this way, *Altar States* can be seen as a form of an accelerated container. The container is initiated and sealed through opening and closing ceremonies and functions as a living body of work where new pieces are introduced periodically as offerings to nourish the space, integrating ritual and symbolism. *Altar States* thus is understood as ritual performance art.

*Altar States* envelops the participant in an intentionally crafted ambience aiming to transport them through a visionary realm. The imagery, themes and symbolism offer a glimpse beyond the physical world into the multidimensional realm of the Spirit World. The Spirit World, the Dream Realm or Visionary Realm, experienced in religious and prophetic states through rituals and ceremonies is an integral aspect of Native American and indigenous cultures and worldviews. Further, by enacting the visions, through song, dance, art, and ritual performance, the visions from the Spirit World are anchored in the physical world. *Altar States* also parallels ways that Visionary artists transcend the “Default World” and envision the “New Earth.” By accessing visionary realms through ritual and altered states of consciousness, Visionary artists gain a source
of personal power by “out-picturing” their visions and then manifesting them into reality in the form of art installations.

The visionary realm embraces the entire spectrum of imaginal spaces; from heaven to hell, from the infinitude of forms to formless voids. The psychologist James Hillman calls it the imaginal realm. Poet William Blake called it the divine imagination. The aborigines call it the dreamtime; and Sufis call it *alam al-mithal*. To Plato, this was the realm of the ideal archetypes. The Tibetans call it *sambhogakaya*; the dimension of inner richness. Theosophists refer to the astral, mental, and nirvanic planes of consciousness. Carl Jung knew this realm as the collective symbolic unconscious. Whatever we choose to call it, the visionary realm is the space we visit during dreams and altered or heightened states of consciousness. (Grey, 2019)

*Altar States* is a realm where artwork is experienced both in the *Light of Day* and the *Light of Night*, with corresponding *Twilight* transitions signaled by original compositions of ambient nature sounds within the accelerated day/night cycle of a repeating 24-minute soundscape. The twelve minutes in the *Light of Day* and twelve minutes in the *Light of Night* honor the Vernal Equinox (equal day and night) during which time the *Altar States* exhibition is alive and active.

In this immersive environment pieces in the *Light of Day* may appear as straightforward artwork, which in *Altar States* however, is enhanced by the use of stereoscopic 3D glasses that when worn rearrange the color spectrum in the eyes of the viewer. The holographic effect of the push and pull of warm and cool colors enhance dimension and highlight symbolic aspects of the artwork. By the *Light of Night* fluorescent glow-in-the-dark paint comes alive under UV blacklights revealing an entirely new environment and series of artwork to experience. While the audiovisual aspects of *Light of Day* and *Light of Night* are in the forefront of the viewer’s experience, the delicate diffusion of Palo Santo essential oil cleanses the mind like sage, cedar, or copal and stimulates a subtle olfactory response to emotion effortlessly drawing the
participant deeper into another realm of *Altar States* where Default World belief systems are suspended.

The benefit of the 24-minute accelerated container is that participants can experience *Altar States* from multiple angles. For example, the contrast and perspective created by viewing the artwork in the *Light of Day* and again revisited in the *Light of Night* invites the viewer to reflect on the same artwork in new ways. In addition, through repetition the participant can discover new observations during each day/night cycle. The light play functions as a metaphor. The participant is immersed in a unique, multisensory, direct experience and the dynamic play of polarities aims to evoke new perspectives in the viewer.

**Significance of the Project**

This project allows the research to be conveyed to an audience who may never read a thesis paper or attend an academic presentation. *Altar States* will showcase my interpretation of the themes and symbols of visionary experience within the rapidly evolving global phenomenon of neo-tribal, visionary, transformational culture to the CSU Chico community and the greater Chico community while exposing participants to another realm, one that aims to bridge the ancient and futuristic, within the contemporary Visionary art world.

Perhaps the most significant social feature of the vision experience is its communicable elements. Something is revealed or shown to the dreamer that participates in a variety of communicable genres. What is the effect of the dream on both the dreamer and the community? What is communicated? Why is the dream veiled and difficult to interpret? Who is the authoritative interpreter? All of these questions are an essential part of the phenomenological structure of the dream. Dream sharing is problematic and participates in the even deeper problems of the unbound nature of the religious, mythic world. The dreamer is faced with the dilemma of finding a way to understand the vision or dream in terms of traditional,
shared meanings while simultaneously striving to perfect and develop its individual significance. (Irwin & Deloria, 1996, p. 165)

The unique importance of presenting research findings in this way is in its creative and alternative, if not atypical, dissemination. By displaying the results of the participant observation research methodology, presented as a participant observer experience to the audience itself, allows for a direct transmission of the individual visionary experience to the collective. This is accomplished in the Altar States exhibition by creating the liminality of an accelerated transformational container, akin to the hybrid progeny of a Transformational Festival and a ritual ceremony.

There are a number of reasons why the spoken report of the vision experience is of secondary importance. First, the translation of dream imagery into verbal description is highly challenging. Contemporary research in imagery has developed around the various dual coding models involved in this very problem of the relationship between visual and verbal processing. The general theoretical consensus is that the translation of primary imagery into verbal expression involves the ability to access and relate distinctive modes of cognition, emphasizing brain hemispheric conditioning. Second, in the Plains visionary ethnography, the tendency is always to enact the dream contents as a means of manifesting the power conveyed in the vision experience. The enactment is combined with the making of physical icons or visionary objects and with the recreation of visual imagery and actions. The translation of the experience into verbal form is done rarely and cautiously, if at all. The sacred quality of the vision, along with the primordial character of the encounter in a highly imagistic culture, reinforces the idea that verbalizing the dream or vision is tantamount to abandoning its power. This is because the image, whether mental or physical, is believed to be charged with a sacred content that must be treated with care and respect. Those seeking interpretation would, of course, relate their dreams, but only to particular elders in circumstances of privacy.

The processing of the vision, both in memory and through interpretive acts, is a matter of integrating highly condensed imagery, with its multiple, diverse associations and mythic connections, into the serial processes of articulate thought and expressive action. Such a synergistic activity requires a combination of bodily, mental, and emotional expression in a context of religious experience to produce an act of power by which the vision can be socially validated. (Irwin & Deloria, 1996, pp. 166-167)
Language is useful to describe similar but not identical experiences, yet is insufficient when pointing towards the ineffable. Background information in the Literature Review and firsthand interview accounts in the Appendix section provide a cultural backdrop for the exposition’s imagery, whereas interpretation of the artwork itself is left to the viewer. While the written portion of this project aims to satisfy logical reasoning within a theoretical framework via the introduction of concepts in linear progression, the *Altar States* exhibition provides the raw experiential content for empirical interpretation, which is subjective to each participant. “The dream telling cannot ontologically reproduce the event; it only encodes the experience in recognizable verbal form. Language determines only one means by which the experience is communicated” (Irwin & Deloria, 1996, p. 166). In this context, to adequately convey symbolic imagery of the visionary experience, a multisensory interactive exposition is the most proximal delivery of information. This delivery method is unusual yet noteworthy because it aims to bypass the logical mind and cross-pollinate the subconscious and supraconscious. “Communication through symbols is not—as some academics want to see it—a limited form of expression, inferior and preceding to writing but quite the contrary” (Rio, 2009, p. 47).

Limitations of the Project

The main limitations of the project are due to factors of time, space, and the audience. *Altar States: An Interactive Tech-Art Exhibition* exhibited at CSU Chico in spring 2018 in the Masters of Fine Arts Gallery for four days. Then, *Altar States: Spirit Worlds and Transformational Experiences* exhibited the following spring at the Museum of Anthropology from March 6-May 17, 2019. The spring 2018 exhibition was activated
with a despacho ceremony by Pachakuti Mesa lineage carriers on the Vernal Equinox and ran for four full days. This was intended as an experimental pilot project. Both in the Masters of Fine Arts Gallery and Museum of Anthropology at CSU, Chico, there were some limitations such as room capacity and hours of operation. The audience was limited to those who could physically attend during the four-day window of the first exhibition and just over two month-long duration of the full Museum exhibition.

At the Museum of Anthropology *Altar States* also had technical limitations. The corridor space intended for the interactive series of seven *Vision Windows: In the Spirit of the Animals* was not included due to storage needs. Although originally designed to be a fully automated lighting and soundscape experience, certain constraints lent towards compromise, where *Light of Day* and *Light of Night* experiences were interactive participant choices. There is also an inherent limitation in providing participants written instructions. Palo Santo essential oil diffusion behind living palm trees, which worked well at the Masters of Fine Arts Gallery, was not possible at the Museum because of their collection of delicate artifacts.

The worldview of participants did result in remarkably different interpretations of the exhibit. In addition to particular personal and cultural biases some attendees were limited by obstacles of their own religious commitments. This is certainly a common limitation in Transformational Festivals as well. Inside the Museum exhibition, the only written information provided to the viewer consisted of a tutorial banner at the door, a general description, titles with poetic quotes, and seven background informational plaques. As intended, I believe that because participants did not have access to the full-length written portion of the work their personal perspectives were limited more to their
direct experience of *Altar States* as an exhibition rather than filtered through all of the
details that lead me to the proverbial branch that I am currently perched on.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Preface

The following Literature Review informed my understanding of the Transformational Festival world behind my exhibition. The reader should note that because there are few scholarly studies on the subject, this Literature Review consists of primary and secondary sources, websites, and information gathered during my ethnographic fieldwork. Much of the “literature” comes from communities of oral tradition.

Origins of Transformational Festivals

Amidst unprecedented global societal and ecological challenges, the emerging culture of Transformational Festivals is rising to respond with ancient and futuristic solutions to catalyze a paradigm shift in planetary civilization. The movement is rapidly expanding globally, however, due to the recent emergence of the phenomena there is a lack of research on the topic. In an online article Dr. Kelly Neff (2014) states,

As a social psychologist, I am naturally drawn to understanding how these gatherings enable such rapid and profound transformation. In my review of the research, I have found no scientific peer-reviewed studies on the topic, and only a handful of articles and anecdotal accounts.

While there is a paucity of academic work on Transformational Festivals generally, there are a number of academic studies of one festival: Burning Man.

A survey of the available information reveals the phenomena is at the forefront and cutting edge of contemporary culture. Searching “Transformational
Festivals” on the search engine Google, for example, reveals a plethora of non-academic sources (302,000 hits), but on academic databases, such as JSTOR, a grand total of (0 hits). The term “Transformational Festival” was first coined in 2010 by filmmaker Jeet Kei Leung during a half hour presentation on the topic at TEDxVancouver 2010. Leung describes Transformational Festival culture as a, “remarkable cultural phenomenon that’s been brewing and evolving for over 15 years now,” that has, “largely been almost completely overlooked in mainstream media and awareness. And there’s some grace to this fact, but it’s a global phenomenon, it’s international” (Leung, 2010).

The transformational label is relatively new, having only existed as a Google-searchable term for less than half a decade. In that time, the label has served the emerging transformational festival culture in the United States by establishing distinct boundaries between themselves and the rest of the electronic music community. (Johner, 2015, p. 80)

While still new and evolving, the origins of Transformational Festivals can be studied between both the context of specific gathering’s origins and more generally from a historical perspective. In an article published in Redefine magazine, Elizabeth Perry points towards grassroots origins. Perry quotes organizers from several of the most prolific events worldwide and states that, “most transformational festivals are born from simple collective gatherings” (2013, p. 1).

In 2015, a collection of works was published exploring psytrance in modern culture. One chapter, “Psychedelic Trance and Multimedia Neo-Rituals: The Modern Shamanic Tools?” concentrates on technology as a modern shamanic tool within the Electronic Dance Music (EDM) and psytrance dance scene.

Considered to be an evolution of psychedelic trance festivals and despite having greater visibility in the USA, the Transformational Festivals are now in the growing phase in other parts of the world, even though the philosophies that define them are
already featured in many large events, including in Europe. (Simão & Tenreiro de Magalhães, 2015, p. 90)

In the article “Indian Spirit: Amerindians and the Techno-tribes of Psytrance,” anthropologist Graham St. John states,

rooted in full-moon parties held on the beaches of Goa, India, in the late 1960s, and incubated within Goa trance scenes that would develop in Goa and mushroom around the world from the mid-1990s, psytrance (psychedelic trance) has proliferated globally. (2013, p. 174)

Andrew Johner, in the article “Transformational Festivals: A New Religious Movement?” points towards the more recent roots of Transformational Festivals as offshoots of rave and psytrance cultures where chill-out spaces were introduced and expanded to “focus on ritualized intention and facilitating spiritual experiences” (Johner, 2015, p. 63).

Sarah Pike refers to the history of American festivals as spiritual destinations in a 2014 article entitled “Selling Infinite Selves: Youth Culture and Contemporary Festivals.” Pike illustrates a connection going as far back as Chautauquas in the nineteenth century, through the counter-culture era of the sixties and seventies, neo-pagan gatherings and contemporary music and art festivals with metaphysical themes in the twenty-first century (2014, p. 8).

For those who are amongst the growing demographic who identify as spiritual but not religious, Transformational Festivals are becoming modern spiritual pilgrimage destinations and the neo-tribe is their community. Transformational Festivals emerged out of the evolution of proceeding and concurrent subcultures; each new gathering carries its own origin story and contributes unique features to a growing global movement.
Co-Creating Solutions

Visionaries, evolvers, solutionaries, and key organizers behind the Transformational Festival movement seek to remedy the global crisis by drawing on influences from Visionary art, permaculture, eco-village, makerspace, and indigenous movements. As the festival world is a proverbial watering hole for many of the creatures in nature, there is often crossover and cross-pollination among the aforementioned movements and the Transformational Festival movement. Author Jamaica Stevens, of Tribal Convergence Network and curator of the book ReInhabiting the Village: CoCreating Our Future and its corresponding web-based multimedia resource network project, describes Transformational Festivals as a new kind of outdoor celebration focused on health and wellness, movement or flow arts, Visionary and interactive art installations, intentional community ritual, health conscious food vendors, alcohol free, artisan crafts and marketplace, inter-generational and multi-cultural inclusion, and the temporary creation of a ‘Village’ type setting with infrastructure set up to sustain 500-60,000 people meeting their basic needs for shelter, water, food, energy, not to mention PLAY. (2016, p. 196).

ReInhabiting the Village includes the work of twelve Visionary artists and over sixty contributing authors and covers the twelve themes of: Heart of Community, Health and Healing, Art and Culture, Learning and Education, Building Regional Resilience, Inhabiting the Urban Village, Community Land Stewardship/EcoVillages, Holistic Event Production, Living Economy, Media and Storytelling, Appropriate Technology, and Whole Systems Project Management (Stevens, 2016, pp. 4-5). Tribal Convergence Network, “a synergistic web of social architects,” brings these themes forth into reality through their events (Tribal Convergence Network, 2012b).
In 2013, Awaken: The Gathering, a Visionary Leadership Retreat organized by the Tribal Convergence Network, was held in the Northern California redwoods to “interweave the threads of conscious festival, leadership summit, and community retreat into one inspiring event” (Tribal Convergence Network, 2013). The intention of Awaken is to “build the world we wish to see,” guided by ethos and materialized through direct action, to serve as a model for a paradigm shift in culture and to proliferate through Transformational Festivals around the world (Tribal Convergence Network, 2013).

Buckminster Fuller, the visionary inventor and architect of geodesic domes, also championed this method for paradigm shift when he said; “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete” (as cited in Lebkowsky & Ratcliffe, 2005, p. 101).

A paradigm shift is a concept that was first coined by Thomas Kuhn in his book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Kuhn, 2015). Kuhn’s terminology relates to the series of alternating phases of normal science and revolutions that overturn and replace old models in favor of new information. The change in model effectively establishes a new norm and the cycle begins again. For the purposes of this work, the concept of paradigm shift can be understood in regards to science, agriculture, technology, culture, social structure, consciousness and worldview.

The Core Council of the Tribal Convergence Network, comprised of Admin working on the meta-integration level and Project Leads focused on direct-action, have modeled sustainable and generative frameworks to co-create “conscious gathering,” “network weaving,” and “whole systems design.” The evolving organizational structural
model of Tribal Convergence Network has adopted their principle of governance from the Holographic Living Model and a Chaordic Structure in regards to our inter-relationships with affiliate groups, communities, and regional branches as we support the sovereignty, identity, and contributions of many diverse groups aligned & united in purpose by commonly held values, goals, and ideals. (Tribal Convergence Network, 2014)

In addition, the Tribal Convergence Network utilizes and integrates the Wheel of CoCreation, “brought forward in the world most famously by futurist Barbara Marx Hubbard,” which is a conceptual framework that was developed over a decade ago working on whole systems solutions to world hunger. To this day many groups and networks use this framework when considering strategies and solutions for addressing the world’s complex issues and interconnected challenges. (Tribal Convergence Network, n.d.)

The Wheel of CoCreation, as adapted by the Tribal Convergence Network for application within Transformational Festivals, begins with worldview and whole systems design, which are central principles guiding the Tribal Convergence Network’s Core Councils’ vision, mission, and core values. Unfolding outward in the Flower of Life geometric pattern from the Core Council are the Collaborative Partners Council, the Regional Council, and the Guild Council, which is comprised of 12 Guilds that correlate with areas of society the Transformational Festival community envisions such as: Science, Earth Stewardship, Spirituality, Councilship, Arts, Media Communications, Wellness, Village Infrastructure, Learning, Conscious Enterprise, Relations, and Guardianship. As did the ancient guilds they are modeled after and many modern guilds in European cities today, the Tribal Convergence Network’s twelve Guilds “organize and govern in areas of their craft” and “gather to skill and resource share, address important issues facing the world and their guilds, and to co-create together” (Tribal Convergence Network, n.d.).
In September 2018, Collective Legacy held its first annual, private, Evolutionary Mastermind and Leadership Immersion at the 500-acre Hummingbird Transformational Living Center in northern New Mexico. The unprecedented convergence was likened to an Awaken: The Gathering “2.0” by one event organizer. The seven-day retreat focused on building inter-organizational mission plans, intergenerational coherence and alliance building, intercultural coherence between entrepreneurship and earth stewardship, indigenous rights and climate change solutions, up-leveling the collective prosperity codex and unraveling outdated culture around money and scarcity consciousness [and] implementing new council models that optimize our shared purpose and address 12 sectors of emergent themes that can empower the continuity of connection post-convergence. (“Collective Legacy 2018,” n.d.)

The applications of these new models, codes, and templates, first seeded in invitational Mastermind and Leadership retreats are later seen implemented on a larger-scale in Transformational Festivals, and then in the “real world.” These emergent models serve to evolve the culture beyond the Default World and usher in a New Earth. The Transformational Festival community has developed its own unique lexicon, which is used universally within the global culture. Specifically propagated from the most world-renowned Transformational Festival, Burning Man, the Default World is a term meaning, “the rest of the world that is not Black Rock City during the Burning Man event” (“Default World,” n.d.). The term is also widely used outside of Burning Man to refer to contemporary society in a general sense. The New Earth is the vision and goal, a utopian “golden age” of an enlightened society that lives in harmony with the rest of creation (Eastman, 2014). The old paradigm and new paradigm are also common terminology for Default World and New Earth, respectively. In other words, shifting from a culture of
taking, resource extraction and exploitation of living beings, to a culture of giving back, or regeneration and restoration.

To bring about this cultural quantum leap to the New Earth requires a paradigm shift in worldview, or a dramatic change in perspective. This type of transformation, a shift in worldview creating a new perception of reality, is also commonly referred to as an “evolution in consciousness.” “Many feel this shift is a change in the culture of the planet, with transformational festival participants leading the way into an aeon of a new society” (Johner, 2015, p. 71).

Transformation can be understood on both an individual and collective level. Individual transformation relates to personal positive changes in body, mind and spirit, thus informing the ways that humans interrelate with each other, nature, and the cosmos. A critical mass of individuals’ transformations taking place within the group catalyze collective transformation, which manifests into positive social change and the implementation of best models and practices to serve the good of the planet as a whole.

Visionary artists, performers, musicians, etc, download or channel multidimensional templates and codes to then “anchor” these higher frequency realities into the New Earth through out-picturing, or manifesting their visions in the world. Many members of the Transformational Festival community identify as being a part of a global neo-tribal culture, so with a core dedication to building relations with indigenous communities, Tribal Convergence Network and ambassadors within the Transformational Festival movement seek to bridge both worlds (Tribal Convergence Network, 2012a).

While criticisms of the Transformational Festival community legitimately acknowledge the hypocritical waste of resources, unconscious recreational
experimentation of substances, cultural appropriation, excessive partying and
debauchery; the focus of this research project is on the organizers, facilitators and
festivalgoers who come to intentionally participate. Many festivalgoers and organizers
themselves have criticized the amount of time, energy and resources devoted to Burning
Man and other events that could be allocated towards long-term sustainable solutions. It’s
obvious that there are problems and challenges on the surface. A deeper search is
required to understand the visionaries, evolvers, change-makers and solutionaries who
move the culture forward. Although there’s much work to be done in some of these
festivals in regards to negative influences of mainstream culture, within this dysfunction
is the beauty and power of what is being transformed in these gatherings. Conscious
organizers are indeed holding space for and welcoming all aspects of the human
condition to be integrated, supported and brought into balance. Healthy celebration,
joyful participation, intentional and ceremonial practices taking place in the movement
can result in life changing experiences that are being brought into participants’ everyday
lives outside of the Transformational Festivals.

Within the contention of criticism, there is an unquantifiable value to the
networking, exchange of information, inspiration, and personal and collective
transformation. Another invaluable benefit of gathering and returning to gather year after
year is in the experimentation and application of emerging models and evolving culture.
Every year there is the opportunity to reflect, revise, refine, adapt and evolve with new
features at the next gathering. In this way, Transformational Festivals can be understood
as social Petri dishes and exploratory utopian bubbles. Some eco-communities have
mastered sustainable living practices yet within only several years have ultimately
disbanded because of social limitations and the challenges of long-term cohabitation.

With the potential danger of global collapse on the horizon, there is still a chance for the learning and practical applications taking place at Transformational Festivals to be integrated into permanent eco-villages that can serve as a bridge to a New Earth.

Global Collapse

Western Civilization is hanging on the precipice of the most devastating global collapse of society in human memory. The Earth’s precious natural resources are rapidly being depleted, the global population has grown beyond 7 billion individuals, over double since the 1960s, and inequality is increasingly impacting the stability of society. Humanity is faced with a choice. Given the limited availability of natural resources and growing population, the ecology and humanity will be intertwined in a mutual fate, however, there is a window of opportunity when necessary adaptations can be made. Transformational Festival events claim to hold keys to the global crisis through collective worldview paradigm shift, psychospiritual practices, and the application of regenerative solutions. Do we fall into irreversible collapse? Or do we choose to re-chart our course?

Our world is progressively more interconnected and globalized. Primarily, globalization has produced unprecedented mutual dependence and the process of unifying a single global society. Although interconnected and dependent, it does not necessarily mean interdependent as the term communicates a sense of equality. Despite being separated by vast distances, modern nations and economies have become more closely integrated as a result of substantially increased cultural exchange and trade. In positive respects, it has allowed for the proliferation of knowledge, the movement of people and
capital, and advancements in technology, which have directly improved transportation and telecommunications. In effect, globalization has made the world a smaller place and may serve as our saving grace.

The interconnectedness of societies in today’s world causes some of the most important differences between how environmental problems played out in the past on Easter Island or among the Maya and Anasazi, and how they play out today. (Diamond, 2006, p. 370)

The other side of globalization has mobilized humanity on a blind trajectory towards collapse. In addition to the destruction of the environment for economic gains there has been a wider gulf in social inequality. Distinct cultures lose their traditions and customs to mainstream homogeneous culture, jobs are outsourced, invasive species and diseases have the potential to become more widespread and multinational corporations exploit resources domestically and internationally without regard for sustainability and ethics.

Even though globalization has accelerated the environmental dangers facing humanity and the Earth, the well-oiled machine of civilization doesn’t give any indication of slowing down. Of the billions of inhabitants on Earth, few have the economic power and influence to put on the brakes on a mass scale. A study by Oxfam International (Fuentes-Nieva & Galasso, 2014) revealed that the richest 85 people in the world have accumulated more wealth than over half of the world’s population combined. That opulence hasn’t trickled down in generosity either. In the 2009 post-financial crisis, the wealthiest one percent seized 95% of economic growth in the US while “the bottom 90% became poorer” (Fuentes-Nieva & Galasso, 2014, p. 2).

The choice is clear, regenerative solutions or collapse, yet many who enjoy a comfortable standard of living continue to ignore the warning signs as if nothing is
wrong. Society has insulated itself from the reality of the situation; however, the unsustainable consumption of limited resources has real consequences. Even past societies that thrived for hundreds or even thousands of years longer than Western Civilization could not foresee their own downfall. Diamond (2006) warns,

That should make us modern Americans hesitate to be too confident yet about the sustainability of our First World economy, especially when we reflect how quickly Chaco society collapsed after its peak in the decade A.D. 1110-1120, and how implausible the risk of collapse would have seemed to Chacoans of that decade. (p. 155)

Another study that was funded in part by NASA entitled Human and Nature Dynamics (HANDY): Modeling Inequality and Use of Resources in the Collapse or Sustainability of Societies, details the collapse of past civilizations and the pivotal choices they faced. Western civilization may need more humility when confronted with the evidence of numerous examples outlined in the report, which show that even “advanced, sophisticated and complex, and creative societies can be both fragile and impermanent” (Motesharrei, Rivas, & Kalnay, 2014, p. 3). The formulas of their model ominously project the fall of Western Civilization within mere decades under the current course, accounting for ecological strain and economic stratification, specifically, nature’s resources, carrying capacity, and the wealth of elite and commoners. Nevertheless, a signal of hope is offered if we can make some crucial adjustments. According to the authors, “Collapse can be avoided and population can reach equilibrium if the per capita rate of depletion of nature is reduced to a sustainable level, and if resources are distributed in a reasonably equitable fashion” (Motesharrei et al., 2014, p. 23).

Currently, scientists are calling the threat to the biosphere the Sixth Mass Extinction of Earth (Barnosky et al., 2011). Recovery from an extinction event at this
scale would be of little significance to humans, as the evolution of new species will take thousands of years. Scientists suggest that humans are currently causing loss of biodiversity and species populations “through co-opting resources, fragmenting habitats, introducing non-native species, spreading pathogens, killing species directly, and changing global climate” (Barnosky et al., 2011, p. 1).

The United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) published an extensive document in 2013 with the straightforward subtitle *Wake Up Before it is Too Late: Make Agriculture Truly Sustainable Now for Food Security in a Changing Climate*. Rising food prices will affect global security the report warns and thus major changes are needed in policy and reform in international trade deals. The report, with contributions from over 60 experts, urges a shift away from conventional agriculture to more sustainable, organic, small-scale farming. Some of the key messages put forth suggest that the world needs a *paradigm shift* in agricultural development and that this transformation is much more profound than simply tweaking the existing industrial agricultural system.

This implies a rapid and significant shift from conventional, monoculture-based and high-external-input-dependent industrial production toward mosaics of sustainable, regenerative production systems that also considerably improve the productivity of small-scale farmers. (UNCTAD, 2013, p. 2)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) also published their findings in a summary for policy makers titled *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptations and Vulnerability*. Among the risks they highlight damage to infrastructure and utilities from severe storms, coastal flooding which will particularly impact big cities, and widespread food crisis as a result of weather extremes (IPCC, 2014).
In the last few decades it has become increasingly clear that humanity is facing a crisis of unprecedented proportions. Modern science has developed effective measures that could solve most of the urgent problems in today’s world - combat the majority of diseases, eliminate hunger and poverty, reduce the amount of industrial waste, and replace destructive fossil fuels by renewable sources of clean energy.

The problems that stand in the way are not of an economical or technological nature. The deepest sources of the global crisis lie inside the human personality and reflect the level of consciousness evolution of our species. Because of the untamed forces in the human psyche, unimaginable resources are wasted in the absurdity of the arms race, power struggle, and pursuit of “unlimited growth.” These elements of human nature also prevent a more appropriate distribution of wealth among individuals and nations, as well as reorientation from purely economic and political concerns to ecological priorities that are critical for survival of life on this planet. (Grof, 1998, pp. 219-220)

Stanislav Grof, a leading international figure in consciousness research, views our global crisis essentially as a crisis of consciousness. In his culminating work, The Cosmic Game: Explorations of the Frontiers of Human Consciousness, he addresses the lack of functional applications in contemporary society of psychospiritual practices. These practices establish where we culturally place value and historically have been integrated into most indigenous cultures and also the origin of most religions. Because mainstream society lacks vital psychospiritual practices, rites of passage, and community ritual, some of these ancient practices and contemporary emergent expressions are showing up in Transformational Festivals within the modern era. As a container for ancient and futuristic solutions, the growing culture of Transformational Festivals is providing the basis for New Earth value systems to come to light.

Paradigm Shift from the Default World to the New Earth

The environmental impacts of globalization, human exacerbated climate change contributing to the damage of Earth’s ecosystems, and society’s response to its
environmental problems (Diamond, 2006), are starting to be addressed by the growing Transformational Festival movement. The documentary web series, *The Bloom: A Journey Through Transformational Festivals*, records the phenomenon through four episodes and twenty-three Transformational Festivals around the world, to show that “amidst the global crisis of a dysfunctional old paradigm, a new renaissance of human culture is underway” (The Bloom, 2013).

More and more festivals are going beyond their core of music and dancing to becoming increasingly immersive, participant-driven environments that integrate an extensive amount of art, workshops, and an emergent spirituality, all with the intention to support personal growth, holistic lifestyles and social transformation. (Leung, 2010)

To remedy the mounting social and environmental problems caused by modern civilization, growing numbers of Transformational Festival organizers are consciously co-creating their gatherings with solution-oriented intentions and direct actions. Three examples of New Earth philosophies in action are experienced through permaculture, Earth and ancestral arts, and right-relationship with indigenous peoples. The Permaculture Action Network, which teaches and implements cutting edge *regenerative* practices, is innovatively effecting larger social and environmental impact by holding pre-festival immersives, workshops and skill-shares during events, and direct action days after events. Earth and ancestral arts zones, immersives, and teach-ins are bridging the ancient and universal traditional skills found throughout humanity within the contemporary setting of Transformational Festivals through holding hands-on workshops on primitive skills. The presence and teachings of indigenous representatives who share their ways of living, (TEK) traditional ecological knowledge (Pierotti, 2012), and
cosmology offers perspectives and worldviews (Cordova, 2007), that when practiced are aligned with a value system of relationship that is in harmony with all of nature.

For many members of the Transformational Festival neo-tribe and indigenous peoples around the world the problem has long been recognized: the old paradigm system is leading to inevitable self-destruction. On an organizational level in the Transformational Festival world, the shift from old paradigm to new paradigm is unfolding through a change from competition to collaboration (Haas, 2016, p. 201).

Given the fact that the Earth is the only planet yet known to sustain life, the entangled ethical and environmental crisis is provoking a search for both ancient and futuristic solutions. The mutual search for solutions has also formed a bridge between cultures. Many philosophies within the Transformational Festival culture and worldview are spread through word of mouth and an oral tradition. Some of these now shared beliefs originate from indigenous traditions, such as this Native American Cree Tribe proverb, which says, “Only after the last tree has been cut down. Only after the last river has been poisoned. Only after the last fish has been caught. Only then will you find that money cannot be eaten.”

In pre-industrial societies, the opportunity for transcendental experiences existed in many different forms - from shamanic rituals, rites of passage, and healing ceremonies to ancient mysteries of death and rebirth, mystical schools, and the meditation practices of the great religions of the world. In recent decades, the Western world has seen a significant revival of various ancient spiritual practices. In addition, representatives of modern depth psychology have developed effective new approaches facilitating spiritual opening. These tools are available to all those who are interested in psychospiritual transformation and consciousness evolution. (Grof, 2018, p. 218)

Western civilization already has the advanced technology to sustainably manage the planet’s resources yet still lacks the essential philosophy to responsibly apply
that knowledge and ability. A widespread paradigm shift in perspective is a fundamental step to collectively surviving the environmental crisis and global societal collapse. Within the Transformational Festival movement, indigenous and visionary worldviews are evolving the culture forward towards tangible solutions in tandem with direct actions sparked by permaculture and indigenous environmental activist movements.

Visionary Art and the New Earth

Visionary art plays a vital role in shifting the paradigm within the Transformational Festival movement, presenting alternative ways of seeing that offer new possibilities of perspectives, worldviews, and beliefs. Visionaries are the evolvers and pioneers of the culture, functioning as harbingers of the New Earth. “Visionary artists inspire us to look beyond the veil of cultural and linguistic limitations by providing insights into an expanded transcendent view of reality” (Sumiruna, n.d). Previous movements in art history such as Impressionism, Symbolism, Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, and Fantastic Realism as well as Postmodernist Conceptual, Performance, and Installation art have notably influenced contemporary Visionary art; however, the roots are prehistoric. “Shaman cave painters made the first Psychedelic Art. Visionary artists seen at today’s worldwide transformative festivals can trace their lineage back to those ancient initiation places” (Grey & Grey, 2018).

Visionary art is the creative expression of glimpses into the sacred unconscious, spanning the most searing shadow imagery of tortured souls in hell, the mythic archetypes of demonic and heroically compassionate forces that seem to guide and influence our feelings, and the luminous transpersonal heaven realms. Visionary art offers bizarre and unsettling insights, convincing us by its compelling internal truth. The mystical experience of spiritual illumination, unity, wisdom, and love is the
ideal of Visionary art. The sublime and primordial infinitude of terror and beauty is not separate from this ideal. (Grey, 1998, p. 150)

Michael Divine writes in his book *The Sublime Dance*,

That mystical experience comes and goes – always new, always timeless – which is why it requires practice. This is why I keep returning to the canvas. Painting is my meditation – with clear eyes and a desire to keep opening up a bit more, I return to this shifting boundary of self and other in that boundless, edgeless oneness. I experience harmony and disharmony, light and dark, sadness and joy, all merging in the infinite dance – forming and un-forming, dissolving and resolving, forever one and forever separate – a dance of union where the whole is never what you imagine. (2013, p. 72)

Pushing boundaries, breaking down culturally cherished illusions, and the deconstruction of old paradigms are often initial necessary stepping-stones to new ways of seeing and being. Visionary artists make use of fantastical imagery, abstractions of reality, and symbolism as signposts to point in the direction towards the unknown. The use of polar opposites often serve as a reference point for the viewer while the contrast also defines the crucial choice point for the individual and collective.

Ken Wilber’s integral map of the four quadrants can help us understand how art evolves consciousness. In the upper left quadrant we have the origin of art in the *Inner World* of the artist or the individual. In the upper right quadrant we have the *Individual* making the artifact. In the third quadrant, in the lower right, we have the systems of integration of that artwork into the *Outer World*. And then in the fourth quadrant, in the lower left we have the inner world of the *Collective* and that’s our culture, the zeitgeist, it’s the interpretation of that artifact. Once we understand things in a new way, it creates a new world, and then a person will have a vision within that new world, and the grand round of art continues. (TEDx Talks, 2013)

Alex Grey, founder of the Chapel of Sacred Mirrors (CoSM) and world-renowned Visionary artist, famously depicts the choice between worlds in “Gaia.” The Earth is in the center of the tree of life with a web that connects all things. On one side of the tree is a polluted, sick, dying world and on the other side the beauty of Nature is portrayed with clean waters, free creatures and vibrant colors. During a TEDxMaui talk
in Hawaii Alex Grey describes the inspiration for the artwork. “This is “Gaia” who’s based on a vision that I had the day our daughter was born. Our world is in peril, and we have a decision, evolution or self-destruction” (TEDx Talks, 2013). Mark Henson, in his work “New Pioneers” also depicts the choice between a self-destructive Default World and the New Earth, ushering an Age of Enlightenment.

The epic drama of life, death, war, peace and the inalienable right to choose is depicted in a huge panorama. Refugees climb out of a war zone, a pioneer comes to a graffiti wall where the choices are scratched out. We all want to live in peace but somehow many are attracted to values that are so dissimilar, war seems to be the only option for a humanity gone berserk. The pioneers and refugees make it to a new world of awakened consciousness. (Henson, n.d.)

Themes of advanced ancient civilizations and a futuristic planetary civilization are prominent within Visionary art and Transformational Festival culture. It is said that in the New Earth humanity will live in a collective spiritual reality of unity consciousness. There are many names and variations of the coming age: the Golden Age, New Age, Age of Aquarius, the Age of Intelligence, the Age of Light, the Age of Enlightenment, 5D reality or multidimensional reality, and the New Heaven and Earth. References to cosmic cycles and great ages are often correlated with astrological alignments in the present-day, which signal the coming New Age, and astrological alignments in the distant past discovered at megalithic sites around the world, supporting the widespread belief in advanced ancient civilization.

The imagery of advanced past and future civilizations featured in Visionary art such as alien-like symbols, futuristic glyphs, energetic structures and megalithic monuments serve to visually depict beliefs in ancient-future Enlightened Ages. Whereas astronauts are explorers of space, visionaries are at times referred to as “psychonauts,” explorers of the mind and mysteries of the universe. Graham Hancock, author, journalist
and host of the documentary series *Quest for the Lost Civilization*, joined Alex Grey for a CoSMolugue on Universal Creativity.

**Alex Grey:** The creative intelligence at the source of our cosmos is potentially accessible to us as we consciously align with it. To be aware of our cosmic origins, allows us to acknowledge the mystery and infinitude of true source. You’ve spent your life exploring these dimensions.

**Graham Hancock:** Cosmic creativity is an instrument of the senses and an exploration of the widest possible range of reality. It’s open, not closed into a narrow reference frame. It’s willing to receive whatever is there, explore and develop it. Creativity can’t be contained in an enclosure. It needs to be open to any possibilities. Open to the possibility that the material realm is not the only realm and that we are part of a much wider, invisible, inaccessible totality. ‘Cosmic’ doesn’t simply mean what is generally conceived as the cosmos, it’s the measurable observable universe and whatever lays beyond. It includes all possible dimensions.

**Alex Grey:** The cosmos, in its original meaning, included inner and outer space, all space, all form and nonform. The cosmos is the order and pattern of everything.

**Graham Hancock:** Cosmos is a word that means different things to different people. It’s used in many hermetic or alchemical texts. The Lament in Asclepius contains within it the notion of the cosmos as everything that can possibly exist.

**Alex Grey:** The French translator and philosopher, Henry Corbin wrote about the visionary imagination in the work of Ibn Arabi, a Sufi mystic. He spoke of a visionary organ of perception that atrophies without exercise, but if healthy, beholds the ‘intermediate realm’ where God meets God. William Blake called it “the Divine imagination.” The imagination is our angel because it connects us with the transcendental realms beyond physical form that are the origin of all creation. The intermediate unites this material dimension and the transcendental without-form dimension. Ibn Arabi’s angelology is a celestial hierarchy in a highly articulated world.

**Graham Hancock:** The word ‘shaman’ comes from the Tungus Mongol. They are ritual functionaries who entered trance to penetrate the spirit world. They were called ‘amán’ or ‘one who knows.’ What the shaman’s call the Spirit World is not so different from what Quantum Physicists call Parallel Dimensions. When we review the phenomenon of UFO sightings, ET contacts and abductions, we have to consider the possibility that we might be dealing with interdimensional rather than simply extraplanetary visitors. Since we are a culture that is exploring space with spaceships, its very easy for us to jump to the conclusion that we are dealing with beings a bit like us but from very far away who have mastered the technology to conquer interstellar space. If we are going to explain this phenomena, we need to take into account the psychic as well as the physical aspects of this experience.
Alex Grey: Over thousands of years, the evolving consciousness of humanity has crystallized in successive waves of world civilizations. Today, humanity’s relationship with Nature is obviously out of balance and we need a new sacred understanding of the universe for the dawning planetary civilization. The shamanic perspective takes us back to the root of culture, where Nature is integrated with a sense of the holy.

Graham Hancock: We are grappling with a gigantic mystery about the nature of reality and non-physical intelligence which is reaching out to us in a number of ways. Works of visionary art guide people through these realms, people who might not have had those experiences. You just need to look at these incredible images and they start to work on your consciousness in an extraordinary fashion. It’s obvious that we need to return to enchantment. We need to reintroduce magic into our lives. Above all else, we need to replace hatred with love. I strongly feel that while we permit society to disallow sovereignty over our own consciousnesses, there will continue to be serious conflict and consequences. It just takes a few people to begin the process of change. Sometimes changes for the better can sweep through society very rapidly once an idea takes root. I ultimately do remain optimistic that this will happen and believe that ancient and sacred plants are once again coming to our rescue and reminding us that there are no boundaries, there are no borders, and there are no barriers. We are part of the web of life and a beautiful and glorious universe. (Grey, n.d.)

During Oregon Eclipse 2017, at The Hub, a lecture was held with Alex and Allyson Grey on their Visionary art, life and works. Among the topics covered, such as visiting temples around the world, visionary experiences, and the deeper meaning of their artworks, the central focus of their talk was Entheon. Alex and Allyson Grey’s current project, Entheon, is the building of a temple sanctuary of Visionary art, the first in the world. The three-story temple structure houses a 12,000 square foot exhibition space to display the finest original works of the Visionary art movement as well as the Grey’s Sacred Mirror series.

Allyson Grey: The vision of Entheon is to build an enduring temple to uplift and inspire a global community. Let’s make it last a thousand years.

Alex Grey: An enduring sanctuary of Visionary art. That’s what we’re about. Well, for years we talked to people, you know, about this thing. We had a vision, we wanted to build a temple and so a lot of our friends had heard this story over and over, you know. One of the guys was a shaman, Alex Stark, and he said, ‘well, I
heal you want to build a chapel and you know a temple or a chapel is the artwork made by a community, so where’s your community? Let’s start full moon ceremonies for this cause and invite whoever would like to come and see if anything will happen.’ He did a despacho that first time we got together and we met in our loft in New York City. People showed up to the first one, about thirty people showed up and it kept growing.

**Allyson Grey:** The first few were practice. January 2003, February, March, then in April we opened it up and we put it online and we invited the public. We haven’t missed a full moon since January 2003. That’s about 182 full moon ceremonies consecutively. We’re still doing them. We never miss them. If you come to CoSM on a full moon we’ll be there, unless it’s Dr. Hoffman’s birthday. We missed that one, it was his 100th birthday, we missed that one, someone else ran it.

**Alex Grey:** That won’t happen again.

**Allyson Grey:** This is when we went to visit Dr. Hoffman for his 100th birthday.

**Alex Grey:** It was January 11th, 2006. 1/11. Isn’t that great? The man of oneness. Albert Hoffman was 100 that day and so he signed his name on the back of this painting that I had made of him and made a little LSD molecule on the back of it. That will be on display at Entheon along with some other relics, including, given to us by his family, his spectacles that he wore on the day that he mixed up the medicine back in 1943. We like to say that making art aligns us with the cosmic creative force.

**Allyson Grey:** We are the artists of life and consciousness is our primary medium. Authoring the story of our lives and painting our picture of reality. We are all sacred mirrors. Art religion: creativity as a spiritual path.

**Alex Grey:** Basically, I think that creative people are working with angels, everybody is, but you can actively engage them, you know, and they can help to work with you, through you, to bring the highest kind of beauty into the world, the kind that the world needs.

**Allyson Grey:** The only thing we have left of past civilizations is art, artifacts, and architecture. That’s it. So if we want to leave a trace, that we are a people, we have to build temples. That’s what they’ve left for us, beautiful temples, where people still from all over the world pilgrimage to be inspired.

**Alex Grey:** That’s what Symbiosis and Burning Man is all about. It’s so much in resonance with all of the great offerings and coming together of communities in the past, except that it’s international. So here’s planetary consciousness becoming cosmic consciousness through human consciousness and seeing oneness through the eyes of the Beloved, and then opening up to being connected to a whole node of net of beings. After doing this painting (Net of Being), which was based on an
ayahuasca blast, I had a vision of a temple, the Chapel of Sacred Mirrors (CoSM) that we’d like to build maybe during the 20’s in our meadow.

Allyson Grey: This is the circular temple that we’re going to build last. Because we wanted to build a place for the Visionary art tradition to be housed and seen, so that’s what we’re doing now right up there in the Hudson Valley. There’s our land, it’s 40 acres, it’s a strip like that, it’s beautiful, primordial. It’s small and very tranquil and beautiful.

Alex Grey: It’s accessible by train actually from Grand Central and you can walk to it. It’s a beautiful setting and it’s a great place to build a temple.

Alex Grey: The visionary culture is something that we’re trying to bring to the Hudson Valley there.

Allyson Grey: We actually became a church in 2008 and it evolved. We did not think we were going to become a church, that wasn’t really our original thought. But when you’re building a chapel you start doing everything that churches do and so therefore somebody said you should really be a church and we’re so glad that that happened because the property was purchased from a church, a radically welcoming church, it was a great transfer. So the inevitable consequence of love is the building of temples. There’s the temple!

Alex Grey: Yeah, this is Entheon and here you can see the Godheads that are all over it, it’s basically one big head. Imagine the building as one big head but it’s got all of these different faces. So, Entheon, it’s a place to discover the God within, “en,-theo.” So here’s Adam and Eve, I guess you could say they return to the Garden, but the tree is a Tree of Wisdom and they’re about to harvest the fruits and attempt to create a better world.

Allyson Grey: There we are in the All One Gallery with Amanda Sage. This is the first gallery you’re going to walk into is the gallery of the international Visionary art movement. To start with it will be an annually rotating show to keep beautiful originals, you know the ones that are iconic for each of the Visionary artists that they keep in their studio, the ones that you only get the posters and the prints of. So we wanted to show them carefully in an acclimatized secure environment. Dr. Bronner’s Magic All One. So Dr. Bronner is a major donor to CoSM so we named the first gallery the All One Gallery. To honor, they are just an incredible company that just gives it all away and helps organizations like MAPS, 5 million dollars to MAPS to study psychedelics. So the Bronner company are just wonderful, wonderful people.

Alex Grey: This says that all religions are one and that’s basically the same point that we’re making. We’ll be showing so many Visionary artists over the years to come. There are many that we might be familiar with, many who are here, awesome amazing artists, people like Mark Henson, Amanda Sage, she’s here, meet this
woman, she’s amazing. Roberto Vinosa, we’ll be able to show his work, he’s passed on and he’s a visionary master that inspired so many people. Andriod Jones who’s amazing VR (Virtual Reality) dome is down here, be sure to catch this, the next evolutionary wave of Visionary art.

**Allyson Grey:** There’s going to be a giant LED screen for moving image art in the All One Gallery, for projection artists, light artists that we’re going to be showing in the All One Gallery.

**Alex Grey:** The chapel will have these architectural features that we hope to put on over the years as we’re able to raise the money. It’s probably going to take at least a million to get all these sculptures on the outside of the building.

**Allyson Grey:** We should say that it took three donors to put the steeple head on the building. David Bronner decided to bring the steeple head to Burning Man so it’s going to be there at the Bronner Camp and then it will be arriving at CoSM. The steeple head is already on it’s way to Burning Man right now. It was picked up, it was made in Thailand and it came across and it’s coming. The doors are being made and are funded and the two Guardian Soul Birds, funded. So these are in progress. As people want to sponsor sculptures we will add them to the building that we’ve built. There’s the old carriage house, 1882. We heard in an ayahuasca vision simultaneously to repurpose this building and not to just start building the chapel in the meadow but rather to use the buildings and repurpose each and every one of them first. So that’s us taking the roof off, and now building the interior of the chapel room and that’s what it looks like when we left but it’s going to be completely taped and painted by the time we get back. It’s coming along. These are some of the early stages; it went through winters without a roof. It’s building, there it goes, it’s a box. We’re so happy that it’s a box.

**Alex Grey:** It’s our big cement box.

**Allyson Grey:** It’s surrounding this old carriage house, you can see parts of the carriage house inside. And that’s the vision, the artist concept, which was created with Alex over a period of two years by the fabulous Ryan Tottle, the Oscar award winning animator, computer sculptor of the movies Frozen and Zootopia. He’s a genius and he worked for nothing with Alex to take his drawings and turn them into sculptures.

**Alex Grey:** He was a true angel. He turned my drawings into this amazing building.

**Allyson Grey:** That’s the Enthurn, for your ashes, or your stashes. It’s a level support for CoSM. We are creating altar objects for you to share the vision with us, to vision it into being with us. That’s the conception of the chapel in the meadow, the Chapel of Sacred Mirrors. Come build with us.

**Alex Grey:** Thank you all.
Allyson Grey: Thank you all, we love you.¹

The Visionary art community navigates not only an important role within the Transformational Festival movement, it also shares a vital role in the exchange of indigenous visionary elements.

Ancient shamanic artists from around the world portray recurring archetypes, such as the radiances and auras of the “light body” and an “x-ray style” of seeing into the body, examples of human-animal hybrids, spirits and spirit worlds. (Grey & Grey, 2018).

The Neo-Amazonian Visionary art style, famously spread by master shaman and artist Pablo Amaringo and his students, is widely celebrated within Transformational Festival culture. As increasingly more Visionary artists partake in traditional ceremonies and indigenous Neo-Amazonian artists participate in Transformational Festivals, new artworks are beginning to emerge from both genres that clearly reference one another’s influences.

Rainbow Prophecies and the New Earth

The dawn of the New Earth and the rise of a new planetary civilization, is a Golden Age foretold in prophecies, where humanity lives in harmony and balance with the Earth, the elements, the plants, animals and the cosmos. The various Rainbow Prophecies across Turtle Island (North America) are often associated with the New Earth paradigm and discussed at workshops, shared through songs or passed through word of mouth at gatherings. Oral teachings such as the Hopi Fifth World of Peace, the Mayan era of the Sixth Sun, the time of the Seventh Generation Prophecy of the Lakota, the Anishinabe Eighth Council Fire, the Eagle and Condor Prophecies, Medicine Wheel

¹ Transcript excerpt from author’s personal video recording of the lecture.
Prophecy, and the Whirling Rainbow Prophecy also inform an emerging universal worldview in Transformational Festival culture and establish a pivotal choice point that requires direct action for future generations to restore the Sacred Hoop.

The book *Legend of the Rainbow Warriors* by journalist Steven McFadden is a report of one of the core myths of America and contains a written compilation of numerous oral accounts from different Native American lineage holders of the Rainbow Prophecies. Many of these oral accounts are not available in print anywhere else. The stories of the Rainbow Warriors foretell of a time of unity among diverse peoples and responsible Earth stewardship following the devastation caused by the current civilization.

While Wikipedia would have people believe that the legend originates in a 1962 book titled ‘Warriors of the Rainbow’ by William Willoya and Vinson Brown, the reality is that the prophecy is ancient, passed down as oral history over many generations. (Black, 2016)

Anthropologist Vinson Brown also presented oral accounts in his books and is not the source of the legends. Rainbow Prophecies can be found originating among many indigenous groups, and is also a shared belief by the Rainbow World Family Gathering of the Tribes and neo-tribal members of the Transformational Festival community. An important feature of indigenous prophecies is that they are passed on through oral traditions, as are many modern day visions and universal belief systems of the Transformational Festival community that are passed through word of mouth, together forming an emergent new mythology.

Originally inspired by the Woodstock music festival of 1969, and a direct descendent of that wave of energy, the Rainbow World Family Gathering of the Tribes is held in National Forests across North America during the first week of July every year.
since 1972. Manitonquat (Medicine Story), the spiritual leader and keeper of the lore for the Assonet band of the Wampanoag Nation went to that first Rainbow Gathering in the summer of 1972 in the Colorado Rocky Mountains.

Since it was to be people of all races, religions, nationalities, classes, and lifestyles, it was called a Gathering of the Rainbow Tribes. There was to be a walk, a pilgrimage to Table Mountain, a place sacred to the Arapaho. The people planned to fast and stay in silence all day on the mountain while praying for world peace and understanding.

Now there are old prophecies that at the end of this world many people of many different nations and tribes would come together to seek a new world and a new way. This would be according to the vision the Creator placed in their hearts. Then, you know, seeing how sincerely they sought this, how deeply they desired it, Great Spirit would hear the cries of their hearts and take pity on them. At that time, the prophecies said, the new world would be born in the midst of the old. This new world would be very small at first, like a newborn baby. But it would be full of life and learning and growth, full of trust and love, like a newborn. Because of this, the new world wouldn’t hate the dying old world, but instead learn how to survive and become strong within it. It was said that the sign the Creator would send of this new beginning would be a white buffalo.

Over 20,000 people came to that first gathering and everyone was treated with respect. It was wonderful. One night it rained. The next day when we came out in the meadow, we saw that a huge patch of white snow on the side of the mountain that faced us had been eaten away and carved by the rain into the perfect shape of a white buffalo. People began to cheer and sing, and many of them wept joyfully. (McFadden, 2005, pp. 14-15)

According to Lakota elder Joseph Chasing Horse, long ago, a spirit woman gifted sacred teachings and a pipe bundle to his people, “known as the White Buffalo Calf Pipe because it was given by White Buffalo Calf Woman (Pte San Wi)” (McFadden, 2005, p. 98). The people have waited for the return of White Buffalo Calf Woman, who promised to return in the manner she departed, as a buffalo calf that changed from red, black, yellow, and finally a white buffalo calf. Now, Arvol Looking Horse, who is the 17th generation of his family to be Keeper of the Sacred Pipe, serving as protector of both past and future, carries a message that was passed down relating to the return of the white
buffalo. With the birth of the first white buffalo calf *Miracle* in 1994, Arvol Looking Horse says,

> The things the elders have talked about for so long, now we can identify with what we have been taught. ... We are given this time to strengthen each other. This is an important time in history. The prophecies are being fulfilled up to this point. We are starting to see a coming together of people going back to their natural ways. (McFadden, 2005, p. 100)

Lakota Chief Joseph Chasing Horse, who is a descendant of Crazy Horse, confirmed the birth of *Miracle* as the calf of prophecy, based on winter counts which date the telling of the White Buffalo Calf Woman story in sacred ceremonies, and as the first sign that all of humankind will live in harmony with the Earth according to teachings that have been passed on in his family for generations (McFadden, 2005, p. 101). Over time *Miracle’s* coat turned black, red, and yellow as did *Miracle Moon*, another white buffalo who gave birth to *Rainbow Spirit* in the year 2000, the seventh white buffalo since 1994. For the Lakota the number seven signified the end of a cycle. Commenting on the birth of the seventh white buffalo, Arvol Looking Horse said,

> The mother of this calf, Miracle Moon, was born three years ago on my birthday, April 30. Now the new white buffalo calf, Rainbow Spirit, was born on June 8 - and that’s the same date that my father, Stanley Looking Horse, Sr. died on two years ago in 1998. My father was keeper of the pipe before me; he passed it on to me. So these are things my family has taken note of. It makes a deep impression on us. (McFadden, 2005, p. 106)

Brooke Medicine Eagle, a *metis* woman of Crow and Sioux heritage, during a vision quest on Bear Butte summit in South Dakota, directly experienced a holy vision of a spirit woman adorned in a sparkling rainbow-colored buckskin dress who communicated a message of the rainbow to her. In 1983 she shared her vision, “We have the opportunity to build a rainbow bridge into a Golden Age, but to do this we must do it
together with all the colors of the rainbow, with all the peoples, all the beings of the
world” (McFadden, 2005, p. 2).

Over one hundred years before Brooke Medicine Eagle’s vision, on the same
sacred mountain in South Dakota, Crazy Horse, the legendary holy man and Teton Sioux
leader had a vision on Bear Butte in 1871. A medicine man of the Oglala Sioux, Frank
Fools Crow, shared details of the vision with anthropologist Vinson Brown that were
written as a shortened version in the book *Voices of the Earth and Sky: The Vision Life of
the Native Americans*:

Crazy Horse went clear to the top of Bear Butte in the midst of summer to
seek his vision, a brave thing to do in those days as the top was supposed to be
highly dangerous with spirit power and the striking of lightning. At the top he laid
down his buffalo robe over some sagebrush leaves and prepared for a long vigil.

On the evening of the third day a thunderstorm came out of the west and
lightning struck all around him, but did not kill him, and that night he had a vision.

In it he saw his people being driven into spiritual darkness and poverty while
the white people prospered in a material way all around them, but even in the
darkest times he saw that the eyes of a few of his people kept the light of the dawn
and the wisdom of the earth, which they passed on to some of their grandchildren.
He saw the coming of automobiles and airplanes, and twice he saw the great
darkness and heard the screams and explosions when millions died in two great
world wars.

But after the second great war passed, he saw a time come when his people
began to awaken, not all at once, but a few here and there and then more and more,
and he saw that they were dancing in the beautiful light of the Spirit World under
the Sacred Tree even while still on earth. Then he was amazed to see that dancing
under the tree representatives of all races who had become brothers, and he realized
that the world would be made new again and in peace and harmony not just by his
people, but by members of all the races of mankind. (1912/1976, pp. 143-144)

Doñ Alejandro Cirilo Perez, a Mayan elder and Daykeeper of his people’s
prophecies, dreams and keeping time according to the Mayan calendar says, “There is
truth in the prophecies about the rainbow and the rainbow people.” The unification of all
peoples, according to the teachings passed to doñ Alejandro, is expected during this
current time of major Earth changes.
People from all of the Americas will unite with people from all the other nations, and they will realize that we are all family, brothers and sisters. This is not my personal vision, but a cosmic vision presented by all the elders - a vision we that we all share. (McFadden, 2005, p. 63)

As many sacred teachings in the form of healing songs have been preserved in unbroken transmission throughout the centuries, the visionary themes of awakening and unification common to the contemporary Transformational culture are also passed on through song and shared both in large gatherings and small circles. One unreleased song entitled “Rainbow Warriors” performed by Flow State is a call to activate the global Rainbow Tribe:

Pachayachachiq gonna teach us another way,
Clear the way, lead the way, Rainbow Warriors.

This is the new tribe from many places, many races
Spirit consciousness manifested in many faces
To the center of the four corners we come together
On the four winds we soar in with one endeavor.

In addition to the straightforward symbolism of Rainbow People indicated by the four root races (Yellow, Red, Black, and White) of the Medicine Wheel, there is also the metaphysical perspective of multidimensional reality and the iridescent luminosity of the rainbow colored Light Body and unity consciousness in the Spirit World. In Andean cosmology the immortal body of light, which is composed of the full spectrum of the rainbow, that all sentient beings inhabit is identified as the Runa Kurku K’anchay.

The process of individual and collective transformation is elucidated in Darpan’s spoken word poem “Metamorphosis.” Beyond shifting worldview in the typical way, such affirmations and prayers suggest the need to “up-level” both knowledge and being to manifest the New Earth.
We stand at the threshold of a great dawning.  
Something deep within life is changing.  
An era is ending,  
and at the very core of creation something new is being born. 
We are awakening from a long, collective sleep, an in vitro dreaming deep within  
the womb of our Mother Earth. 
Now is the time of a great shifting of cosmic wheels, which will result in the  
reformation of our Earth and trigger a radical shift in consciousness. 
A galactic tidal wave of light is descending upon the Earth, activating the highest  
potential, raising the frequency. 
Reality is being reformed, redefined. 
The activation of new neural patterns will trigger new perceptions, new  
information, new impulses and a recalibration of DNA. 
Open yourself to these higher dimensional frequencies. 
Let go. 
Love each other in these coming times. 
Be kind to each other. 
Gather in community, share yourself, live your dream, live your heart. 
Open. Open yourself. 
Be prepared for the challenges to come, the dark times of chaos and upheaval. 
We will experience a dynamic recalibration of electromagnetic fields and Earth  
systems on a global scale. 
Stay present. Stay calm and centered. 
Try not to judge what is happening, surrender to the process. 
Hold firm in the knowledge of what is being birthed. 
The process of birth is an awesome undertaking, an arduous task, often fought  
with intensity. 
Stay in the heart. 
Stay connected to beloved friends and family. 
Remember that this too shall pass and is a necessary purification,  
a great purge of all that not in resonance with what is being born in us. 
All will be redeemed and reformed in miraculous ways. 
Chaos will become peace and sorrow will become joy. 
Trust. Trust with love. 
The butterfly is a marvelous demonstration of the power within trust and  
vulnerability and in the miracle of metamorphosis. 
After all, what is a butterfly if not the flowering of caterpillar beyond its wildest  
dreams? 
Emerging from the womb of the chrysalis, the butterfly discards its restrictive,  
silken shell to inherit a magical new world of flowers, breezes and sunshine,  
a world of freedom and delight and a celebration of its divine nature. 
Spreading her wings for the first time, she has no idea whether she can fly. 
She simply opens her wings in perfect confidence  
and is effortlessly conveyed into the spiral dance of graceful flight  
and all that then remains is the joyous participation in the divine ecstasy of  
creation.
As you turn your light inward and witness your true nature
    you become an empty mirror and go beyond beliefs or doctrines.
Dissolving the veils, the formless takes form.
Going or coming, we are in the right place.
As the veils are lifted, we will perceive worlds of unimaginable beauty.
Self-transforming astral worlds of light will shine down and interpenetrate the
density of matter, making it translucent, less dense, and more permeable to our
thoughts and feelings.
Multi-dimensional reality and the interconnectedness of all things will be as clear as
sunlight.
And just as the light is not separate from the sun
    and the wave is not separate from the ocean,
so shall we realize our connection to the Source
and recognize ourselves in each other as
one
vast
ocean
of love and light.
Let the divine recognize the divine.
Lights will find other lights,
    and as the sparking ignites within you, so it will ignite in others
in a majestic radiance of consciousness and set the world alight in its
magnificence.
A new world
    without fear, without war, without greed,
in the safe custodianship of an awakened species,
manifesting peace
with love, light and celebration.
May the divine Mother bless all sentient being as her children.
May the ascended ones bless mankind.
May religion be swept away by the revelation of what we are.
May the children of the Earth understand that this is to be a birthing place of a new
humanity.
The birthing of a new man, utterly discontinuous from the past.
Released,
    transformed,
metamorphosed,
into a multidimensional being.
Conscious,
    whole.
and
free.
(Darpan, 2011, track 8)
Intentions Behind Transformational Festivals

Transformational Festivals like Global Eclipse Gathering have made intentional efforts to anchor participants’ transformational experience in a communal ceremonial context. Over 70,000 attendees gathered together at the megalithic Sun Temple to collectively witness the awe-inspiring event of the total solar eclipse, also known as the Great American Eclipse. In this way, these Transformational Festivals are designed to be safe containers for “peak experiences,” deep connection, and personal evolution. The multi-day festivals also serve as Petri dishes for experimentation and represent an evolving model for global transformational culture and a living blueprint for the *New Earth*. “Many TFs also advertise themselves as forbearers of a new worldview, with many of their attendees claiming to be a part of a larger social movement paving the way for a new planetary culture” (Johner, 2015, p. 59).

Transformational Festivals set themselves apart from other music festivals in the aim to transition away from entertainment consumption and a solely audience/performer relationship to interactive participation and co-creation (The Bloom, 2013). The intentional culture of participation can be seen in workshops, “playshops,” and interactive art installations. Further, the distinctive gifts, talents, offerings, and personal styles of participants are encouraged because their participation generates a unique co-creative experience.

These events serve as spiritual pilgrimage destinations with the purpose of reuniting community, rekindling a relationship with the natural world, and reinventing identity before, during, and after the threshold of ritual. This is an important function and
intention of Transformational Festivals in that they “facilitate a form of liminality – acting as a modern rite of passage for participants” (Johner, 2015, p. 60).

The documentary web series, *The Bloom: A Journey through Transformational Festivals*, chronicles the global cultural movement and identifies twelve themes in the four episodes of the first series.

The first episode considers the “Fundamental Frequencies” required to be a whole human, examining how Transformational Festivals create immersive environments of INSPIRATION, which become containers for peak experiences of CONNECTION, very often catalyzing powerful HEALING processes with lasting and positive life-changing effects for participants.

THE BLOOM’s second episode examines how Transformational Festivals have become opportunities for “Practicing The New World” through the paradigm shift of producing reality through CO-CREATION, utilizing an ethos of PARTICIPATION which results in immensely rich environments that take the festival beyond commercial entertainment and into the realm of meaningful community experience and ritual, and MODELING, the many ways that participants are taking their transformational experiences back into their communities and their everyday lives.

Episode 3 explores the “New Ways Of the Sacred” that have emerged in Transformational Festivals, including how they re-instill a sense of MYTHOS for participants, or an awareness of our role in a greater multi-dimensional reality and story; fulfilling the functions of RITUAL once common for traditional societies and often missing from contemporary urban life; synthesizing into an authentically third millennium spiritual culture that is experiencing and honoring THE SACRED as a community without dogma, doctrine or charismatic gurus.

In the final episode of the first season, THE BLOOM explores the current learning curve of Transformational Festivals in “Growth Edges of Evolving Culture,” through exploration of the themes of GENDER ALCHEMY, a cultural process seeking to find balanced gender relations that unite the powerful medicine of the divine feminine with an emerging model of the divine masculine; INDIGENOUS RIGHT RELATIONSHIP, how Transformational Festivals support an honoring and deep connection with the earth, and the way this is catalyzing a cultural re-encounter between neo-tribal festival communities and representatives of indigenous communities in right relationship; and RE-INHABITING THE VILLAGE, how outdoor festivals are answering the need for experiencing the deep community connections of the village, and the growing number of festivals consciously becoming multi-generational community gatherings. (The Bloom, 2013)
Host Jeet-Kei Leung, who defined the term *Transformational Festivals* during his TEDx talk in Vancouver, BC in 2010, states “there’s no doubt that many participants are having life-altering experiences at festivals and an increasingly coherent culture is emerging that fosters and supports these experiences” (Leung, 2010). In addition to the first four episodes of The Bloom Series is a Culture Spotlight mini-series exploring Vessels of the Divine: Spotlight on Visionary Art, Greening the Festival: Spotlight on Modeling Sustainability, and Bringing it to the Heartland: Spotlight on Rootwire, which looks at how Transformational Festival culture is finding its way into the Midwest, the East Coast, and the Southern states.

The forthcoming second installment of The Bloom Series, will be a 12-episode documentary series “about a generation who have found their home in powerful Transformational Festivals and the journey to bring their life-altering experiences back to the ‘Default World’” (The Bloom is Coming, n.d.). It seeks to answer the questions of why “innovators, celebrities, and creatives flock to a week-long temporary city in the middle of a harsh desert,” why these events have become a “rite of passage for millennials in the millions” and if the answer to these questions could “hold keys to the pertinent issues of our world today” (The Bloom is Coming, n.d.).

**Growth Edges of Transformational Festivals**

The growth edge of Transformational Festival culture changes as the movement evolves. Tracking this “edge” as it grows provides insight into where Transformational Festivals are now and the highest level of development of the movement thus far. This is useful in understanding where they are going, growing, and unfolding into. As Transformational Festival producers up-level the standard of their
offerings, participants also raise the bar in their expectations of what contemporary festivals offer beyond music alone.

A growing number of Transformational Festivals now embrace sustainability as a fundamental philosophy. “One of the latest evolutions of the Transformational Festival movement is a focus for some producers on environmentally conscious green principles” from composting, recycling, upcycling re-usable materials, leave no waste, end single use, local sourcing for food and suppliers, imposing impact fees and encouraging carpooling to reduce cars, creating systems for gray water and drought considerate water practices, etc (Stevens, 2016, p. 196). Some are now applying ecological values and practices through a focus on permaculture, regenerative agriculture, reusable “Blissware” for vendors and patrons via a token and utensil exchange and washing system, bike-powered sound systems and solar-powered showers.

An emergent idea has been to take the inspiration, energy, and momentum created by Transformational Festivals to engage in direct action. Recognizing the powerful potential within the Transformational Festival community, festival producers, organizers, and grassroots leaders are engaging those inclined towards making the world a better place and social change where they gather (Stevens, 2016, pp. 196-197). Direct actions currently take place in three ways: in the days leading up to events via immersive courses, during events via workshops, and after events via a call to action. These calls to action galvanize “volunteer forces to take part in direct action and social changemaking through examples of urban permaculture, placemaking, disaster relief, and service to the local community near a festival site” (Stevens, 2016, p. 197).
For Transformational Festivals to evolve to the “Next-Level,” both producers and participants must evolve as well.

“Next-Level” of Transformational Festivals

The “Next-Level” of Transformational Festivals is on the horizon. An increasing number of Transformational Festival producers are exploring ways to take a step further and own the land that events are held on. Currently, Transformational Festivals are temporary gatherings that are often set up and taken down within a week, only to be rebuilt the following year. Owning and stewarding the land addresses concerns surrounding sustainability. The intention is to reduce the environmental impact, consumption, and waste at events and to maximize the impact of the time, energy, and resources required for such an undertaking (Stevens, 2016, p. 197).

As they are now, Transformational Festivals model the temporary creation of “village” culture. The idea of modeling permanent “village” culture in intentional communities based on ecological principles and permaculture, as seen in the global eco-village movement, is nothing new. This was the topic discussed in the Permaculture Action Hub at Symb10osis: 10 Year RE:Union in 2015 by Juliana Birnbaum and Louis Fox at their workshop called “Eco-Villages and Intentional Communities” and in their book entitled *Sustainable (R)Evolution: Permaculture in Ecovillages, Urban Farms, and Communities Worldwide* (Birnbaum & Fox, 2014, p. 3). By harnessing the momentum of direct action and a focus on sustainability at events, the cross-pollination of the two global movements are giving rise to not only the “Next-Level” of Transformational Festivals but also the “Next-Level” of eco-villages.
Land stewardship improves long-term viability of the land-base and provides the opportunity for a symbiotic relationship where both the people and the land benefit. The vision is to host Transformational Festivals with components of direct action and permaculture that improve the land and to use the land as immersive education centers throughout the year in between events (Stevens, 2016, p. 197). The centers based in eco-villages or a community land-base aim to offer hands-on courses in health and wellness, as well as permaculture design, an, “approach founded on the patterns and relationships of nature and the ethics of sustainable societies. Based on indigenous knowledge from cultures throughout history, it is geared toward transitioning communities to a new paradigm” (Birnbaum & Fox, 2014, p. 3). This “Next-Level” of Transformational Festivals through land stewardship also fulfills the dream of many participants who desire the community of festival life year-round, and of those who want to apply the creativity and freedom found at festivals to the “Default World,” as well as of those who seek to build a bridge to the “New Earth.” Many Transformational Festivals aim to build that bridge through respectful dialogue and meaningful action.

Cultural Appropriation and Cross-Pollination

It is important to distinguish between cultural appropriation and cross-pollination within the context of the Transformational Festival movement. Without education and discernment of the difference between these terms one is at risk of assuming that cultural appropriation is taking place when it is in fact the opposite, and vice versa. Cultural appropriation is defined as, “the act of taking or using things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture” (“Cultural Appropriation,” n.d.). Cross-pollination can be understood as the
equal exchange of culture, ideas, worldviews, value systems, and practices done with mutual respect. Both cultural appropriation and cross-pollination can be found in the festival scene, as Graham St. John writes in “Indian Spirit: Amerindians and the Techno-tribes of Psytrance,”

For while many projects may be brought into question, such as those that homogenize distinct cultural traditions or that do not seek consultation from native sources, some exemplify genuine efforts to advance change in the wake of the recognition of crises of self and globe, or contextualize exchanges involving intercultural performances. (2013, p. 191).

Societal mores and taboos of ownership are not “black or white” in the Transformational Festival world. Within the conversation, one must also acknowledge that remix culture, particularly of found sound and sampling in electronic music, has informed neo-tribal philosophies around cultural borrowing and exchange (St. John, 2013). The art of re-visioning is nothing new, nor limited to music, just as Robert Rauschenburg created art that was a “prescient harbinger of today’s culture of sampling and remix” (Melnick, n.d.). The “remixological sensibility” in Transformational Festival culture also manifests in the form of exotic ethnic, tribal or spiritual lineage identification, as well as their complementary accessories, “dress options, body modifications, hair styles, and preferred symbols” (St. John, 2013, p. 174). A superficial survey of the Transformational Festival scene will reveal a plethora of cultural fashion faux pas, however, a more in-depth excavation is needed to interpret nuanced expressions within this “artistic countertribalism where practices of appropriation cannot be simply derogated as theft but must be considered in the light of methods of digital re/production, aesthetic syncretism, and conscientious use” (St. John, 2013, p. 173).

Vigilance should be maintained in order to prevent the infringement of cultural copyright, especially in the context where Europeans undertake a questionable “no-
boundaries” life-course that disregards and disrespects the rights and traditions of distinct indigenous peoples. Where intercultural appropriation (sound and otherwise) involves flow from subaltern, traditional, or colonized to privileged peoples, practices may be more accurately designated acts of misappropriation or expropriation. But critiques must be grounded in solid investigations of the perpetrators of “appropriation,” rather than an advocacy that discounts the complexity of appropriative, and indeed appropriate or ethical, practice. (St. John, 2013, p. 187)

There are three schools of thought in relation to cultural appropriation and cross-pollination. One school of thought maintains that certain native and indigenous practices, traditions, teachings, medicines and ritual objects should not be shared. With good reason, the justifications for this school of thought include the impacts of colonization, exploitation, misuse, and the danger of diluting or losing sacred aspects of culture. The result has been to prohibit the sharing of practices because of the risks.

Another school of thought favors intercultural exchange; there have always been proponents of this philosophy both within indigenous groups and foreigners. Contemporary supporters of this philosophy believe it is imperative to share at this time specifically. They believe that the time is now and there is no more time to waste. The perilous state of the world’s ecology and humanity’s spiritual poverty and disconnection from the land necessitate this need to share. Spiritual beliefs in Rainbow Prophecies are further motivating an impetus to engage in cultural exchange. The result has been an increase in the amount of indigenous representatives attending Transformational Festivals and the invitation for those inspired to participate outside of festivals in indigenous rituals, healing ceremonies, and traditions.

The last school of thought doesn’t care one way of the other and many people fall into this category. In light of these various schools of thought there is a conundrum where there can be no single authority. Another problematic situation in regards to
authority is lineage. Some define lineage holders strictly by ethnicity, heritage or bloodline, whereas others view lineage based on the teacher-student relationship, preparedness for initiation and permission to practice or conduct ritual and ceremony. Traditions, medicines, and ceremonial accoutrements are passed through lineages and this action can be controversial.

Everyone is Indigenous. All descend from the sacred waters, the land, the cosmos. Everyone has been subjected to the same forces of separation, abstraction, division. Spirit separated from mind, heart from intellect, being separated from relationships with food source, from relations with the waters, the star nations, from covenants with the sacred sites. All anyone has to do is go back far enough and there is a time when you were connected to the sacred. -Chase Iron Eyes, Present at Power of Prayer. (Devaney, 2017b)

A paradigm shift in worldview from the Default World to the New Earth and the unification of diverse peoples is what Transformational Festivals aim to advance. It is important to understand that there are various *worldviews* present within this context. “Attitudes toward the natural world, creativity, and the human place in the cosmos, among other patterns of thought, form what anthropologists call a worldview” (Stone, 2012, p. 16). To understand different angles, from the metaphysics perspective, the Standard Average European (SAE) worldview relates to the universe in terms of cause/effect and sees nature as static, whereas in comparison with Native American worldviews, they are seen as causeless, ceaseless, dynamic (Cordova, 2007, p. 100). In respect to a Land Wisdom Typology, Callicott outlines that four distinct types of land wisdom have been proffered in the literature so far: Utilitarian Conservation, Religious Reverence, Ecological Awareness, and Environmental Ethic (Callicott, 1989, p. 210). In relation to spiritual beliefs,

Four prominent features of North American Indian religions are a similar worldview, a shared notion of cosmic harmony, emphasis on experiencing directly
powers and visions, and a common view of the cycles of life and death. (as cited in McPherson & Rabb, 1993, p. 12)

In a similar way, in terms of South American indigenous spirituality, Luis Eduardo Luna writes:

According to its worldview there is an underlying spiritual aspect to everything that exists, an intimate relationship and even dependency between the seen and the unseen, between the world of nature and human creation on one side, and normally invisible and intelligent forces. The preservation of the individual and the community, and therefore human action, depends on finding the proper balance in this complex reality. (2011, p. 8)

Luna continues on the subject of shamanic transformation and communication with the plant and animal world:

We are here confronted with a radically different epistemology, one that presupposes the possibility of perceiving the world from the point of view of a non-human creature, something which cannot be rejected as a totally far-fetched way of thinking, even though difficult to comprehend without direct experience of the states of consciousness in which it is based. A dialogue of worldviews is needed, one that goes beyond ethnographic curiosity and which accepts that other approaches to reality are indeed possible. Western science, due to prejudices, is largely totally ignorant about the possibility of acquiring actual information about the natural world in non-ordinary states of consciousness. (2011, pp. 10-11)

The theory of psychological egoism assumes that humans are hard-wired to pursue only self-interest. The idea that humans are “hard-wired” was inherited in part from Cartesian prejudices (C. Peldo, personal communication, 2015). Ultimately, it lends to the belief in a separate, mechanical view of reality. Thus, historically, the Standard Average European (SAE) worldview has been at odds with indigenous perspectives of environmental ethics (Callicott, 1982, p. 293). An anthropocentric worldview is often cynical of an ecocentric worldview. In “Primitive Man’s Relationship with Nature,” Guthrie admits, “I personally doubt that large numbers of people can ever develop a new emotion of concern for their environment in which animal life is considered equally as
valuable as human life” (1971, p. 722). Guthrie’s statement exemplifies a disbelief in the honest reverence for nature characteristic of the Shallow Environmentalist perspective. The damage on the planet has significantly been a result of a colonial culture of resource extraction and exploitation from the time of “contact” to the current state of the modern world.

Deep Ecology, on the other hand, refers to an ecocentric metaphysical philosophy (Curry, 2012, p. 101). From this perspective, the counterargument to Shallow Environmentalism would be, “cultural ideals serve to guide and inspire personal and collective behavior; they do not determine it. Conversely, episodes of behavior in violation of cultural norms do not necessarily invalidate or impugn them” (Callicott, 1989, p. 203). Proponents of Native Americans as Deep Ecologists place more importance on beliefs. Within the Transformational Festival world, there is an exchange of spiritual and ecological philosophies through cross-pollination often resulting in shared beliefs, specifically highlighted here in attitudes toward nature. These worldviews inform identity and relationship within an emerging culture and ethos.

In *Indian from the Inside* McPherson and Rabb (1993) draw attention to the fact that worldview is culturally relative (p. 14). “The West, unlike the ancient Greeks, sees “nature” as essentially hostile, stingy, unstable, dangerous. The description of the Earth as a living being is one of those concepts that is fairly well distributed among Native Americans” (Cordova, 2007, p. 106). Viola Cordova, the first Native American woman to receive a PhD in philosophy, in her book *How It Is*, explores Native American worldviews and the concept of Earth as a living being. This concept is akin to the Gaia
hypothesis of James Lovelock (Cordova, 2007, p. 115), which Curry states has, “powerfully positive ecocentric potential” (2012, p. 100).

Included in the philosophy of Deep Ecology is the land ethic proposed by Aldo Leopold which, “simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land” (Curry, 2012, p. 95). Callicott clearly states, “the Ojibwa land ethic and the Aldo Leopold land ethic are identical” (1989, p. 215). McPherson and Rabb also agree that the “attitudes and behavioral rules” of the Ojibwa in relation to non-human beings should be considered an “environmental ethic” (1993, p. 16). As McPherson and Rabb argue, given the environmental ethics of Native Americans, it’s evident that Western civilization could learn a great deal from the ancient wisdom of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Through exchanging ideas, practices, and worldviews, cross-pollination essentially functions in Transformational Festivals as international relations on a grassroots level. Looking to the contemporary role of indigenous peoples in environmental activist movements such as Idle No More of First Nations in Canada, the Standing Rock “protest” encampments of Water Protectors in North Dakota, as well as the indigenous presence in the Transformational Festival movement can shed more light on the exchange of environmental ethics within a wider historical context.

The Western value system, with roots in colonialism, has proliferated a culture of taking. Indigenous value systems that emphasize a culture of giving to maintain cosmic balance in the form of offerings, prayers and ceremony are present in the Transformational Festival world. Also prominent are those that offer knowledge of spiritual transformation and ancestral, planetary and self-healing. The paradigm shift
from the Default World to the New Earth takes different expressions, therefore instances of cultural appropriation and cross-pollination can be complicated, awkward, and even problematic. It is no surprise then to find questions surrounding the re-encounter of indigenous practices within the neo-tribal festival culture.

Cultural appropriation, taking place out of ignorance, such as people wearing headdresses as a costume or uninitiated pseudo-shaman conducting ceremony, is generally seen as disrespectful. Confrontation of cultural appropriation may take place in what activist and member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Chase Iron Eyes, calls “teachable moments” (Devaney, 2017b).

Cultural appropriation is wrong, yes. Original Nations have survived genocide, slavery, holocaust, and an ongoing genocide, an ongoing deliberate attempt to undermine our dignity, liberation & self determination. For foreigners to prance around in a headdress is wrong. I have lived my life confronting objectification when I first learned of it at 19 years old from the Association of American Indian Psychology. I will continue to confront it and I thank those who fight that fight. Natives confronted people at Burning Man in teachable moments. -Chase Iron Eyes, Present at Power of Prayer. (Devaney, 2017b)

Workshops on the subject can be found at Transformational Festivals in an effort to educate, create dialogue and build bridges between indigenous peoples and the neo-tribe community. In 2014, at Symb10sis Re:Union, the Permaculture Action Hub hosted a workshop on decolonization. One of the facilitators of the Permaculture Action Hub, shared a synopsis of that discussion. Because the interview was conducted during preliminary research, the individual quoted is referred to here under the pseudonym Arise.

We had some folks who have a lot of experience that are either indigenous folks to the Americas themselves or have worked with those communities for a long time facilitate that particular discussion. They were talking about the issue of decolonization. They’re basically looking at how can we decolonize our relationships and decolonize our culture, because we live in this culture of
occupation and this culture of colonization. And that shit is the antithesis of what permaculture is all about. It’s that culture of colonization, that culture of occupation. It’s the culture of resource extraction, it’s the culture of the degradation of the landscape, it’s the culture of the exploitation of our fellow people. I feel like permaculture provides a solution set towards how we transition that to a culture of inhabitation. Where we’re regenerating and improving, or at least having a symbiotic relationship with the land-base. Where we are having a mutually beneficial relationship with the people around us. And how can we move from this culture of occupation to this culture of inhabitation? Another way to say that is: how do we decolonize our way of being? I think that’s what that was focusing on. In that conversation they were talking a lot about the actual experience of indigenous people in these communities. Such as cultural appropriation and all these different things that come up from that personal political lens of being a person of color, an indigenous person. (Arise, personal communication, November 12, 2015)

Given the pros and cons of cultural appropriation and cross-pollination there are still a growing number of indigenous representatives willing to share with the Transformational Festival community. Those who know the prophecies and have chosen to share believe the time is now. A Cherokee Elder said of the Medicine Wheel Prophecy, “Peace will not come on the Earth until the circle of humanity is complete; until all four colors sit in the circle and share their teachings” (Global Drum Prayer, n.d.).

At Oregon Eclipse 2017, indigenous representatives in a spirit of collaboration and cross-pollination proclaimed unified messages such as “We are all one” and “All Nations from All Directions.” Chase Iron Eyes spoke to the urgency of this message when he said, “We don’t have time. We must share.” He was present as a part of the August Call to Action kickoff tour to collect signatures for a petition to drop all Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) charges against Water Protectors at Standing Rock. The tour went to Beloved Festival, Oregon Eclipse, Red Lightning Tribe at Burning Man, and Bhakti Festival.
The Global Drum Prayer, Power of Prayer, held at Red Lighting Camp in Burning Man, was broadcasted live worldwide and synchronized with over 520 drum circles around the world. Burning Man is also known as Black Rock City and the theme of Burning Man 2017 was Radical Ritual. The initiative to bring Standing Rock to Black Rock was rooted in a desire for cross-pollination through the global synchronized drum circle (Devaney, 2017a). Prior to Standing Rock, Chase Iron Eyes had visited the Rainbow Gathering to learn about how to manage camps for thousands of people. During Standing Rock, Red Lightning Tribe, a Burning Man camp, brought their geodesic dome to North Dakota in support of the Water Protectors. The Red Lightning Press Release explains the intentions behind the collaboration, which was to:

Create a space for the Standing Rock spirit and leadership to be present at Burning Man. Amplify the voices and messages of indigenous wisdom keepers and tribal members. Create and stream the world’s largest global synchronized drumming prayer circle through the Unify platform.

“I am thrilled to be joining Red Lightning Camp at Burning Man this year. Our movement that began at Standing Rock to preserve water and protect the environment has become a fight to protect freedom. We will only succeed in growing awareness and making our stand effective when we form bonds with communities who share our values. Burning Man is an experiment in progressive living — a space where people give rather than sell, where human potential is explored rather than disregarded. I look forward to bringing the values of the water protector movement to Black Rock, alongside my co-counsel at the Lakota People’s Law Project, Daniel Sheehan.” —Chase Iron Eyes

Our community, Red Lightning, a Burning Man camp, had the honor of serving with a presence at Standing Rock in the main encampment, Oceti Sakowin (7 Council Fire) from September 2016 until the camps were evicted in February 2017. We lent support through solar power, wind power and dome offerings, where community met in leadership council, women’s circles, decolonization meetings, reconciliation workshops, cultural celebrations and prayer gatherings. We also assisted with camp clean-up efforts upon eviction.

THE POWER OF PRAYER was born from a direct request by the 7 Council Fire leadership to carry the prayers of Oceti Sakowin in our spirits to the places we came from, and to connect with First Nations near our communities who are facing similar challenges. It was this heartfelt request that ignited and gave birth to THE POWER OF PRAYER vision, as we seek to carry forward the prayers of Oceti Sakowin, along with deep reverence for Mother Earth.
On Tuesday, August 29th at 6:30 PM at 8:15 and Esplanade, we will gather in a drum circle around sacred fire, where tribal beats will amplify across Burning Man’s best sound-system through the well-known art car Mayan Warrior, joining us all the way from Mexico City. The drumming prayer circle will be streamed out over synchronized prayer platform Unify, who has a reach of over 16 million people. At 7:00 PM, we will come into prayer led by wisdom keepers. (Burners: Me, 2017)

Although the message of unity was promoted on various media prior to the event, after Burning Man, Chase Iron Eyes discovered himself in the midst of an online controversy regarding cultural appropriation. A video went viral which sparked debate and was then featured on powwows.com in an article entitled “Fake Pow Wows at Burning Man Has Indian Country Raising Its Eyebrows.” An altered video of the Global Drum Prayer focused on Chase Iron Eyes and Andrew Ecker that was edited with overdubbed fake powwow music, which fueled the speculation. The video listed Chase and Andrew’s social media accounts in the description and text suggesting they are “selling these drumming wayz with sweat lodge if you like!!” (yo mama, 2017). The video was the only one uploaded to the “yo mama” channel, a throwaway Youtube account. Chase responded through a Youtube video to address the accusations:

It seems that there’s quite a bit of controversy or discussion and uptick in the recent, very cleverly edited videos that are making their rounds with claims that I led a powwow at Burning Man, which is this large Transformational Festival. Anyhow, I just wanted to take a little bit of time, I’m out traveling right now. The purpose of my travels right now are to try to put the attention and refocus attention back on the Water Protectors at Standing Rock, many of whom I’d say 70%, 80%, 90% of whom are not Oceti Sakowin or certainly not from Standing Rock. These are people who dropped everything in their lives to lend their energy, their time, potentially to sacrifice their liberties. There’s 843 people that were charged, more than 600 cases still remain open and people are facing prison time.

So, I had setup, with the help of our team a tour of what is called the Transformational Festival family, or the scene, and Burning Man is probably one of the largest of these Transformational Festivals. My journey in that world started with the Beloved Festival. The closest thing that I have experienced to the Transformational Festival scene is the Rainbow Gathering, the Rainbow Family Gathering. If you recall, this is one of the times that I stuck my neck out in the spirit
of building bridges and pathways to cooperation because the Rainbow Family have expertise on how to tap water lines, how to feed thousands of people, in the hypothetical instance that we would need occupy camps or survival camps or perhaps liberation camps in pursuing a peaceful and dignified and prayerful reclamation of an area like the Black Hills or other sacred sites that possibly should be under our jurisdiction and so forth.

Naturally, my personality is not confrontational. I’m not very confrontational, nor do I seek out a conflict, but it’s my path, my duty, my gift and my responsibility to be able to build bridges. (Elrod, 2017)

Other representatives that were present at Power of Prayer responded with their comments as well:

I came to pray. It’s that simple. I didn’t bring out my chanupa (sacred pipe), there was no sweat-lodge. I came to pray. I don’t see anything wrong with praying along with my brothers and sisters around the world. I look forward to more of this. It is time now for this, people need to understand this. I look forward to the time when all people will come together to heal our Earth. Red Lightning has provided a bridge between many cultures. -Robert White Mountain, Present at Power of Prayer (Devaney, 2017b)

Mending our relationship within the hoop is everybody’s business. It’s not just an Indian thing. My hope is to share with people how to get back into a right relationship with Mother Earth and the rhythm of the cosmos. Your cosmic identity has no bearing on the color of your eyes, your hair, or your skin. No more enemies, we must become allies. -Mazatzin, Elder Present at Power of Prayer (Devaney, 2017b)

Anthropologist and co-founder of Lucidity Festival, Jonah Hass suggests that beyond a shift in perspective, there needs to be a profound healing of our collective past and a cultivation of cultural literacy. Of the variety of methods that support and foster cultural literacy, he advocates deep listening as one of the first and most important practices, especially when approaching embedded wounds (Hass, 2016, p. 204). Hass writes in ReInhabiting the Village:

As rainbow people, we celebrate each of our unique ancestries. We honor all color, appreciate and celebrate diversity, and hold space for every being to come into their highest potential as sovereign members of our One Human Family, with strong roots in their distinct lineage and bloodline. Empowered with where we come from, we may more fully know who we are. (2016, p. 204)
While dynamic, the process of cross-pollination can initiate and support mental decolonization, inner-work and the integration of harmonious value systems. There isn’t a rulebook on the subject and so this can be both an individual and a collective process of trial and error. Wisdom keepers, spiritual representatives, and elders inform the guiding ethos among Transformational Festival organizers in how they navigate this new territory.

Role of Indigenous Worldviews in Transformational Festivals

Elders, traditional musicians, and wisdom keepers are often invited to hold opening and closing ceremonies, teach workshops, perform songs and dance, and share their voices, traditions, and ways of life at Transformational Festival gatherings. Indigenous peoples have also organized festivals that are bridging the ancient and modern worlds, where members of indigenous communities and members of the Transformational Festival community are welcomed together to build unity in gatherings and also to support their social and environmental causes such as Medicine Music Festival in Peru and Wirikuta Fest in Mexico. In addition, there is also neo-tribal cross-pollination in indigenous environmental activist movements such as Idle No More of the First Nations in Canada and the Standing Rock encampments of Water Protectors in North Dakota.

A growing number of Transformational Festivals are beginning to build relationships with indigenous communities, also known as “People of the Place,” on the ancestral land where Transformational Festivals take place. This is in recognition that the Native Americans and First Nations of the North American continent are the original
people of their ancestral land, which is considered unceded indigenous land. In this way, Transformational Festival producers, in a spirit of respect and solidarity, consult indigenous representatives of the lands where events are held, to honor the lineages, spiritual practices, and the traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) that they possess. This change is beginning to transform both how and why the Transformational Festival community is gathering (Stevens, 2016, p. 197).

While this Transformational Festival Culture is still young, full of inspiration and with so much yet to learn, there is a power and undeniable force that can be harnessed for the sake of bridging our past and our future; older culture with younger culture, mainstream with alternative, with indigenous. (Stevens, 2016, 197)

Tribal Gathering in Panama, an 18-day Transformational Festival on a Caribbean beach, bridges North, Central, and South American traditions by inviting over 60 indigenous tribes to share their teachings. The first half of the event is full of indigenous immersives, workshops, and over 40 shamanic ceremonies. The second half of the event transitions into a dance and music celebration with over 200 workshops and wellness offerings.

Unify Fest in Santa Fe, New Mexico, is self-identified as a multi-cultural Transformational Festival. The main message of the gathering is a global calling for the unification of humanity, which includes all peoples from all traditions. Outreach to indigenous groups, particularly those native to New Mexico, is a fundamental goal of Unify Fest.

Our mission is to bring a voice and the hope for unification to all people of the world and allow opportunities for wisdom, truth, ceremony, and healing to be shared. This global gathering for world peace includes music, speakers, ceremonies, and participants from all walks of life, traditions, cultures, races, tribes, countries, and beliefs. We aim to unite, inspire, and educate each of us to live in harmony with the planet, increase our health, and give back to the land and all living beings. As part of our initiative to honor and give back to the local land stewards we are
inviting the pueblos and native land stewards of New Mexico to be a part of UNIFY FEST. We feel that honoring and supporting our indigenous communities is an essential component on the path towards unifying all peoples of the earth. We are gifting tickets to honorary delegates from each tribe to represent their community. You will also be invited to speak on behalf of your tribe during the festival to share your concerns, needs, wishes, and prayers. It is our desire that the participation of all of the New Mexico pueblos and dozens of additional tribes will spark a new kind of hope as we enter a planetary shift and realignment. The unification of all cultures and wisdom is essential for a harmonious world. (Unify Fest, 2017)

The shift in relationship between the Transformational Festival community and indigenous communities is a relatively recent phenomenon. In 2012, Symbiosis Gatherings planned and collaborated with the Paiute Tribe community in Nevada where Pyramid Eclipse was held for the Annular Eclipse at Pyramid Lake. Then Symbiosis Gatherings worked together with the Central Sierra Miwok tribe in 2013 and again in 2015 for Re:Union, the 10 year anniversary held during the Autumnal Equinox at the Woodward Reservoir in California. Each year it is tradition for the indigenous leaders and elders of diverse lineages from other Symbiosis communities to make offerings to the “People of the Place,” the people on whose ancestral land the festival is held and who conduct the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the event. The most ambitious Symbiosis event to date with over 70,000 in attendance, Oregon Eclipse, was held in August of 2017 at Big Prairie Summit, in the Ochoco National Forest, Oregon, USA during a Total Solar Eclipse, which included the historic 1Nation Earth Camp, comprised of indigenous representatives from around the world.

Oregon Eclipse 2017 was produced by Symbiosis Gatherings, which originally started as a Burning Man after-party and has since evolved into one of the most progressive and multifaceted Transformational Festivals in the world. Aligning with a Total Solar Eclipse, the 7-day international gathering, Oregon Eclipse 2017, continued
the tradition of holding the celebrations during celestial events. The Transformational Festival returned with another year of Elemental Alchemy, concurrently running immersive workshops including a two-week Permaculture Design Course Immersive, as well as a Visionary Art Immersive, Ancestral Hearth Immersive, Herbalism and Earth Arts Immersive, Ritual Performance Immersive, and Yoga Immersive, that were hosted on site for the five days leading up to the official Opening Ceremony.

The unprecedented collaboration, now known as Global Eclipse Gatherings, was comprised of fifteen international Transformational Festivals that co-curated the event, such as Bass Coast Festival (Canada), Beloved: Sacred Arts and Music Festival (Oregon), Envision Festival (Costa Rica), Hadra (France), Global Eclipse Gathering, Lightning in a Bottle (California), Noisily (UK), Ometeotl (Mexico), Origin (South Africa), Rainbow Serpent (Australia), Re:Birth (Japan), Science and Nonduality (California), Sonic Bloom (Colorado), Symbiosis (California), Universo Paralello (Brazil).

The next Global Eclipse Gathering, for the Total Solar Eclipse of 2020 in Patagonia, South America, announced its international collaborators more than a year and a half before the event. The first announcement, at the time of this writing, included 22 collaborators from 11 countries in Latin America. Although they have yet to announce the local collaborators in the Neuquén province of Argentina where the event will be held, Global Eclipse revealed that rather than working only with large event producers they will also open up to grassroots creators and collaborators from all over the world (Global Eclipse, 2019b). So far, Global Eclipse Patagonia Gathering 2020 plans to co-create the event with Amazonas Andés (Bolivia), América Mestiza (México), Animalia
(Chile), Cosmic Convergence (Guatemala), Cumbre Tajín (México), Earthdance (Argentina), Envision (Costa Rica), Hybrid (Chile), Jaguar (México), La Calaca (México), Lemún (Argentina), Markahuasi (Perú), Festival Nómade (Chile), Ometeotl (México), Puesco Fest (Chile), Pulsar (Brazil), Quelonios (Dominican Republic), Seeds (Ecuador), Universo Paralello (Brazil), Tribal Gathering (Panamá), and Voodoohop (Brazil) (Global Eclipse, 2019a).

At Oregon Eclipse 2017, Global Eclipse Gatherings realized an important and historic achievement, the creation of 1Nation Earth Camp, spearheaded in alliance with leaders of the Standing Rock movement and indigenous representatives from tribal nations from around the world. On the first day of Oregon Eclipse, Chief Delbert Black Fox Pomani of the Wanagi Ska Band of the Dakota Tribe, founder of the Indigo Bridge project for uniting all indigenous nations, spoke at The Hub of the great honor bestowed upon his people to bring the original fire from Standing Rock to ignite and maintain the Sacred Fire at the week-long gathering.

Following traditional singing and drumming at the opening, a Lakota Sioux speaker introduced Chief Black Fox and Chase Iron Eyes.\(^2\)

Thank you very much. We also want to express ourselves. Earlier today we had a ceremony done here. We were asked by the 1Nation Earth Camp over here to bring the fire from Standing Rock. The fire that lit our 1Nation Earth Camp here, we were fortunate enough to have a brother from Standing Rock, Robert Eder, bring that fire to our fireplace here to put his prayers down, and our Great Sioux Nation here. My brother Chase Iron Eyes here, and my brother Delbert Black Fox Pomani here, to share their stories, to share their wisdom, their values, to be able to be a testimony from this great movement that happened at Standing Rock. Each and every one of us were touched by this movement. It brought all Nations together. So in this moment, that’s what we want to bring here to 1Nation Earth Camp as well. So at

\(^2\) Transcript excerpts from author’s personal video recording of the event.
Chase Iron Eyes then approached the microphone and shared:

They have established something monumental because this is the first year that they’ve established the camp. And we look to the south of us, there’s almost 60,000 people coming to Eclipse 2017, and everybody’s come here because of their own reasons, just like everybody came to Standing Rock because of their own reasons. Those of us who answered the call of the water and of the ceremony, the young people conducted ceremony in order to put the call out to the universe, by the beat of the drum or by songs that have been passed down from time immemorial.

What I was able to tell very quickly is that in the Transformational family, everybody is on a spiritual path trying to get woke and stay woke, but on a different plane than just racial justice or economic or environmental justice. We’re all on the path of spiritual liberation. And when you come here, when you engage, when you actively place your spirit in song or in dance or in art or in the universal elements, when you feel the sun hit you or you hear a bird sing or the wind will hit you in a certain way, or maybe you’ll see this eagle that has blessed these brothers’ ceremony up here. However it is that you connect, we understand that you are trying to re-connect, that you’re trying to find your way home. Because we were all subjected to different forms of colonization. There is the colonization that resulted in genocide and land theft, but there’s also, and we don’t skip over that obviously, we’ll be truthful about it, but there’s also a colonization that happened to you and your ancestors who were original Earth nations, who had connections to the cosmos, connections to the sacred sites and the waters of all of your homelands all around the world. And we know that if we pay attention to each other and to Mother Earth, to the natural elements and we use our spiritual dignity and our ability to re-connect in whatever way we know how, and for some people that’s this space. Those of you who just happened to be here at the same time that we happened to be here. Or maybe you were walking by, out of 60,000 people those of you right here right now with us, sharing this space, sharing time, if that exists to you. I was very keen on observing that, to a lot of people, the transformational movement is a ceremony. That’s why you come here. So you can reconnect, so you can experience bliss, you can dance, you can sing, you can make your life art-full. And we are here carrying ancient gifts, ancient songs, ancient knowledges that were not extinguished by those forces of colonization but we know that the same forces that colonized us also separated all of us. You included. Our mind from our spirit, our human connections to the land and to the waters.

Many indigenous people representing their own communities and traditional values are excited to connect and build relationships with the Transformational Festival community. At the Sacred Fire and throughout the Oregon Eclipse event the 1Nation
Earth Camp would extend the welcoming call of “All nations from all directions.”

Standing Rock Sioux member and former North Dakota congressional candidate Chase Iron Eyes was on the Transformational Festival circuit with constitutional attorney Daniel Sheehan of the Lakota People’s Law Project. At each festival on their August Call to Action kickoff tour at Beloved Festival, Oregon Eclipse, Red Lightning Tribe at Burning Man, and Bhakti Festival, a massive art installation was constructed with an image of Sitting Bull, symbolic within a historical context, serving as the beacon point to collect signatures for the petition to drop all DAPL charges against the Standing Rock Water Protectors. 55,000 signatures were presented the following November in North Dakota.

Those who seek to build bridges to a New Earth are in a process of re-encountering. At times, the roles are clear whereas some are still in an exploratory phase. Within the container of Transformational Festivals, the most significant examples of cross-pollination are taking place in global prayer initiatives, ceremony, permaculture, primitive skills and ancestral arts, and the spiritual imagery and symbolism exchanged between Neo-Amazonian art and Visionary art.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The research findings, based on the reviewed literature, film and other media, participant-observation and interviews, are broadcast through an interactive tech-art exhibition. This unusual dissemination of research findings both displays the researcher’s methodology of participant-observation from ethnographic field research to the audience and also offers the audience a personal participant-observation experience of their own through the immersive multisensory environment and interactive nature of the exhibition. Utilizing this methodology to illustrate the “what it means” results of ethnographic investigation can also be described another way, such as Mateo Magee, author of the book *Peruvian Shamanism: The Pachakuti Mesa*, shared following a workshop on shamanic healing, ceremony, and the mesa (altar).

The Peruvian teachers I have sat with rarely describe the “what it means” portion of the work. And when I ask them they usually respond like the great pianist who, when asked to “describe” what he was trying to say through his masterful piece of music, could only respond by playing the song again. In other words, if what he was attempting to convey could have been said with words, the music would be entirely unnecessary. *In other words, ceremony is a lot like art.* The ceremonialist conducts, and it is up to the observer to make their own assessments/critiques of what it means to them. The shaman often speaks through the language of symbols and archetypes, i.e., through terms that could mean something different to every soul present to witness, and indeed could even be different to the same person when revisited at different stage in life. (M. Magee, personal communication, April 4, 2018)

The research effort aims, through the process of observing and recording, to collect data through a qualitative research methodology. Specifically, the ethnographic methods of participant-observation and semi-structured interviews were employed during the course of this study. Qualitative research, as a non-numerical measurement approach,
is the ideal method for addressing the project’s research questions for a number of reasons. First, this approach provides direct experience of the phenomena, in this case, Transformational Festivals. Beyond the literature review, direct experience is essential to developing new theories and hypotheses. Second, it generates detailed information and rich descriptions of the phenomena. This raw detail is important for a deep understanding of the complex, under-studied, and emerging phenomena of Transformational Festivals. Third, it allows for the participants’ story to be told and provides a unique perspective into their worldview.

The participating ethnographer seeks to get close to those studied in order to understand and write about what their experiences and activities mean to them. Ethnographers should attempt to write fieldnotes in ways that capture and preserve indigenous meanings. (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 16)

Fourth, as a transformational experience, a qualitative collection of information allows for greater depth in understanding personal, sensory, and psychological perceptions.

I have employed the ethnographic method of participant-observation for several reasons. The goal of this research method is to gain insight into the experiences, lives, and worldviews of those within the Transformational Festival community. The kind of data and intimate understanding that in-depth participation provides is unobtainable through second-hand information, literature alone, or any other method. Through initial investigations and preliminary fieldwork, I acquired a cultural overview of the research subject. Overall, my aim was to gain a deep knowledge of the participants, activities, and culture through immersion in the Transformational Festival community. “Immersion in ethnographic research, then, involves both being with other people to see how they respond to events as they happen and experiencing for oneself these events and the circumstances that give rise to them. In this way, immersion gives the fieldworker access
to the fluidity of others’ lives and enhances his sensitivity to interaction and process” (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 3). Participant-observation is also an effective method for measuring the difference between what people claim they do and what they actually do, authentically (Malinowski, 1922, p. 25). In addition, it is useful in gaining insight into behaviors and rituals that people would not be capable of describing even if questioned directly. For the duration of this project, I have utilized the method of participant-observation to develop and maintain relationships with members of the Transformational Festival community and to study activities considered pertinent to the research questions.

I have conducted ethnographic interviews, a type of qualitative research, to generate detail-rich data. These semi-structured interviews enhance the information gathered through participant-observation by obtaining diverse interpretations and perspectives. In addition, qualitative interviewing provides a greater coherence and depth from informants (Weiss, 1994, p. 3). The ideas that this project were designed to investigate are multifaceted and encompassing, therefore, semi-structured interviews have numerous advantages. While there is a set of questions, there is also flexibility to add additional questions during the interview based on the informant’s responses. With consideration to the project’s objectives, the interviews have been crafted to answer specific research questions about the Transformational Festival community, their relationship with indigenous communities, and the next steps of this movement.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Transformational Festivals are a growing international social movement that seeks ancient and futuristic solutions to the problems facing humanity and the planet today. These events serve as experimental containers for personal and collective transformation, the application of traditional and cutting-edge technology, sustainability, and sovereignty models, and the proliferation of alternative ideas and worldviews. The cross-pollination of ancient indigenous cosmovisions and neo-tribal perspectives offer an emerging mythology and ethos to course-correct and navigate towards a New Earth paradigm. The Transformational Festival culture is now in the phase of establishing inter-organizational mission plans, alliances with diverse communities, frontline direct actions and designing macro-level systems integrating innovative technology with Earth-based wisdom.

Based on the available literature and ethnographic fieldwork, an interactive tech-art exhibition *Altar States: Spirit Worlds and Transformational Experiences* has been created to express the themes of transformation, interconnectedness, symbolism, cross-pollination, worldview paradigm shift, and New Earth philosophy that I discovered researching in the Transformational Festival world.
Conclusions

The written portion of this project served as background for the expression of the Altar States exhibition. The reception to this format was well received by the public and responses were collected in a Feedback Loop book. Curator of Education at the Museum of Anthropology, Adrienne Scott, shared that the exhibition has drawn a lot of interest from the public and has received a high amount of feedback. Adrienne also shared the experience of forty-five seventh-grade students whom she guided in the Altar States exhibition. The students, who were first-time museum-goers, were instructed to enter the space in silence and after 12 minutes she described an audible “gasp” from the group in unison as the *Light of Day* transitioned to *Light of Night*.

The following are a few of the other reactions to Altar States from the Feedback Loop book:

“This self experience allowed me to be at peace, also to reach into my indigenous roots! Lovely way to get into a different realm! Great work!”

“Inspiring, brilliant! Thank you so much! Loved it! I will be back! –Retired teacher of art for 40+ years”

“This exhibit is divine, the colors, the sounds, the emotions that are inspired here are exactly what we need more of.”

“Beautiful. Having been in the jungles of South America I can say there really is an altered state there.”

“Thank you for bringing this to our campus. I hope this will help people open up to the divine and all one energy that is always around us. Your art is beautiful and reminds me of powerful, life-changing experiences I’ve had.”
“Powerful experience helped heal my soul!”

“It invokes the opening of mind and heart. Thank you!”

“Enjoy the color and complex designs. Night/Day views offer so much to think of and see differences.”

“Truly amazing and beautiful exhibit! Everything about your work made me feel like you grasp the connection of the movement of Nature and Spirit. Great job and thank you for sharing your energy.”

“I really like how you can view each piece for a while and then add glasses and it changes your perspective.”

My original intention was to convey my ethnography to a wider audience in a way that expressed the essence of a transformational container. Because immersion was such a central aspect of my research, I designed the container to be interactive and multisensory thus capturing distinct features of the participant-observer experience. The Museum’s public access has spread the fundamental concepts of my work beyond the academic community to travelers, locals, tourists, art enthusiasts, museum visitors, primary and secondary school field trips, and people who would be interested in this subject and otherwise would have not been exposed to it yet. Since many individuals within the aforementioned groups may not seek out an academic presentation or read the full-length thesis, *Altar States* inhabits an edge space and catches people where they are already passersby.

Recommendations

Among the top recommendations for future research is the documentation of oral history within the Transformational Festival movement. I also suggest that video is
the ideal medium for broadcasting oral accounts. Because of the emergent nature and rapid evolution of the phenomena, immersion and conducting interviews is vital to an accurate cultural overview, tracking the current growth edge and the implementation of “Next Level” trends such as land stewardship, blockchain, cryptocurrencies, and alternative sovereign economies. In addition, it is recommended to research oral accounts of Rainbow Prophecies from indigenous and neo-tribal voices, particularly following ample investigation of the cross-pollination school of thought.

It is recommended to study the social models, architecture, and permaculture within the eco-village movement and the application of Transformational Festival culture in aforesaid movement and vice versa. Moreover, the overlap and cross-pollination of eco-village and Transformational Festival movements within contemporary indigenous environmental activism movements like Standing Rock and Idle No More. It is recommended to conduct an in-depth study of neo-tribe experiences participating in ancestral traditions and indigenous ceremonies; furthermore, the sacramental use of plant medicines and entheogenic psychotherapy for personal healing and transformation. Additionally, specific study of sacred geometry and shamanic imagery, symbols, and motifs shared between Visionary art and Neo-Amazonian art styles is recommended.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX
Voices of the Neo-Tribe: Perspectives of Participants at Transformational Festivals

The following interviews are included to give voice to the neo-tribe and to provide additional insight into the experiences, worldviews, and aspirations of members of the Transformational Festival community. Interviews conducted during preliminary fieldwork at Symbiosis Gathering 10 Year Re:Union will use pseudonyms in place of the informants’ names and have been shortened to highlight specific threads in the dialogue. Select interviews from Symbiosis’s most recent event Global Eclipse Gathering: Oregon Eclipse 2017 are included in full.

Preliminary Fieldwork at Symbiosis Gathering 10 Year Re:Union

i. Pepper

Pepper, a long-time participant of Symbiosis who has also worked on promotion teams at other Transformational Festivals, was introduced to both Rainbow Gathering and Symbiosis Gatherings for the first time in the same year, 2009. Pepper discussed her experiences at Symbiosis Gathering 10 Year Re:Union and the next step she would like to see as a participant at Transformational Festivals.

It was really my first festival. I was attracted to the line-up and I was also attracted to the workshop dynamic and all the different learning modes and things that they offer. The overall experience you could say is just re-connection. This festival is testimony. It’s sacrament. It’s what we have to do to satisfy our souls. It’s New Age, sure. It’s different, sure. But it’s really got old roots of congregation and trance-induced states, just everyone being on the same wavelength.

I honestly prefer Rainbow Gatherings over all of them. But I have been to Burning Man. Symbiosis is kind of the through-line for my music festival, the New Age-y West Coast scene. But I’ve been a vendor at Gaia Festival. I really like, actually, I would say Rainbow Gathering is great but right up there with it is the Buckeye Gathering, which is a primitive skills gathering. And I’ve stopped going to so many of the, you know like, I went to Lighting in a Bottle one year. It was really, really great but I’m moving more and more toward land-based skills, survival skills and ancestral arts.
The next step would be incorporating more primitive skills. I know they have that. And I know that they try to do more ritual and ceremony. I think redefining ritual and ceremony for us in our day and age. To really hold that space for the health and wellbeing of everyone and the ascension and awakening and enlightenment, which we all on the path strive for. We could focus more on transforming and what we want to transform. If that means that we are creating a new paradigm then everyone that’s participating, that’s buying a ticket, should know that’s what they’re going to, that that’s what really appreciated. But to actually go there with a pure heart and intention. I think that’s when you get these festivals, that container, the safety, the intention is there.

ii. Style

Style is a veteran participant of Symbiosis events and an aspiring Visionary artist who worked off the cost of his Experience Pass for a vendor to gain entrance into the festival. Style describes his “peak experience” in the sacred space Elemental Altars, the direction he would like to see the gatherings go in the future, and his experiences in indigenous ceremonies outside of festivals. Comparing the difference between a contemporary festival and what makes a Transformational Festival “transformational,” Style says:

I think for me it revolves around a lot of the art and the subject matter: Visionary arts, visionary imagery, sounds, workshops and speakers that are bringing up new concepts of consciousness. With that could be new tips on living, lifestyles, gardening, agriculture, technologies that can forward human evolution and consciousness in a beneficial way.

Elemental Altars was a huge pinnacle of inspiration for me at Symbiosis. They had energetic form. There was this space that the altars held, held more energy space than just physical space. I was sitting at the Water Altar. That was when I had the realization that it’s holding energy form. Just as much as the physical is there but the physical is just like the structural, like the bones. But everything else was an energy form that gave much more definition, like a container. That was a pinnacle moment of inspiration because that’s the kind of creation of art that I want to be making.

I think the evolution of these Transformational Festivals is to take it up a notch as far as intention and actually hitting the nail on transforming. Actually creating a container, an atmosphere, where the participants are hitting points in themselves that they are transforming in a way that is where we’re wanting to see human culture and society go towards. Everyone is coming together and engaging in ways that are like where we want to see the world develop and evolve to, integrating a new worldview into the culture.
As much as I’d like to see the festival evolve, it’s more of, and I think it’s coming, I feel it, for the festival to evolve, it’s the participants that are needing to evolve. Evolve from the state of going and just witnessing the festival and enjoying the attractions and the music and the art, to more like participating in it. Taking whatever gifts that they hold and they want to share with this community of people who are all coming together to transformation shift this culture.

Right now there are a lot of observers and people looking to party and wanting to have a good time and are still bringing old patterns of behavior and perceptions from this current society, which is outdated, habitual, unhealthy and not very conscious. There’s the clashing of the two worlds, our current paradigm, and this whole new paradigm of the Transformational Festivals and evolutionary consciousness, and some people are more gentle and diligent in how they are moving into the new paradigm direction.

I feel we’re moving more into a symbiotic relationship. It’s a community relationship, a deeply connected relationship, with the people we live with and the land especially. It’s a huge connection to the land and to our allies and our guides, the unseen forces that are always present and around us helping us, guiding us intuitively to know which direction and which way to walk. I see this new paradigm being a deep symbiotic connection. A deep connection to Source, to Creator, you know. It’s much more of an intuitive consciousness rather than an egoic consciousness. It’s much less of the individual, it’s more of the communal, what’s good for the community. How is this going to affect seven generations down? It’s looking long-term rather than short-term growth. Instant gratification, less of that. It’s more of knowing that this is going to continue for seven generations. It’s like passing the torch. It’s like going back to the old ways. But in a sense it’s not really going back, it’s reclaiming what the old ways were, what we’ve forgotten, what we lost. And integrating that into our current, “modern,” which is just advancements in technology and ways of living, but we can have both. We can have these technologies that assist us and information and communication but also tying it back to the root of how we even got to this point of caring for the Earth and the land. Caring for our fellow neighbors, people in our community, respecting beliefs and ways of giving praise, to creation, to the gods, whatever god you give praise to for being alive in this physical body. It doesn’t really matter. It all stems from one Source. It’s like a diamond. It has many different facets and you can be looking through one to the center and someone on the other side is looking through a different facet, which may look completely different but its still peering to the one center. These are new and out-there ideas but that’s the kind of stuff that challenges our current paradigm. This current paradigm is what our parents and grandparents were born and conditioned into. So, we’re only the product of that but we don’t have to perpetuate it, we can break away. I see how unhealthy and dysfunctional it is. There’s not a lot connection to what gives us life, from the water to the food to the things that inspire.

I feel like this whole new paradigm and the path towards that is a remembering. It’s a walk of remembrance of what it means to be alive, what makes us alive, and what gives us life, and give back to that, having that gratitude. I have a shelter. I have a home. I have clean organic food. A lot of people don’t have that around the world or even here in our own state or country or town. It’s those little things that bring in that awareness of the gratitude, of like, this is a blessing. And to use that blessing by not taking advantage of it, by acknowledging how blessed we are to have our basic needs met and to be able to have
that and not have to stress about it. Not have to worry that you don’t know where your food is coming from tonight and to use that energy to create something beautiful, to create something that is going to help our species, our human race evolve to a new paradigm, to a new level of consciousness, that is going to allow for everyone to live in harmony and in balance with the land and with themselves. Not have these conflicts and turmoil over silly things, inequalities, injustices.

I have experienced indigenous traditions outside of festivals, I sat in an ayahuasca ceremony that is held in a hybrid container of Huichol tradition, which is the indigenous people of Mexico that sit with the peyote medicine, and with a South American tradition of ayahuasca ceremonies. So it was just with the medicine vine down in South America, but a lot of the traditions and practices from the Huichol, you know the songs, the healing prayers, the space was more held in that tradition. Those have been very potent and very important experiences for me in my remembering of myself and my connection to my guides and spirits, and most importantly my ancestors, having direct communication and contact with my ancestors that are from indigenous bloodlines. I do hold that. I have that blood in me. Everyone has an indigenous soul. Everyone is in some way connected to a group of indigenous people, whether it be from the Huichol of Mexico to the Celtic of Europe. Everyone is from an indigenous group of people. To remember that and to be contacted by your ancestors is something I think is super beneficial for this time of remembering where we come from, what our traditions are, what are some things that they have to teach us, what insights and what gifts are they passing down to us.

iii. Arise

Arise is the co-creator of the Permaculture Action Hub and the 5-day Permaculture Immersive leading up to Symbiosis Gathering 10 Year Re:Union. As an organizer, workshop facilitator, and participant of the festival, Arise shared unique insight into many aspects of Symbiosis Gatherings and the permaculture movement. He explains permaculture, the origins and history of the Permaculture Action Network, and points towards an emerging “Next-Level” of Transformational Festivals when he discusses the visions of his friends and fellow festival organizers to create permanent eco-villages on sites where festivals are held. While Arise’s main focus now is centered on macro-level community organizing and direct action, he also spoke on his own experience within the Transformational Festival scene. “The festival community for me has been incredible for my own personal evolution. I found my own empowerment and
my own ability to relate to these events in a way where now it’s a much more symbiotic
give and take.”

I work with this group called Permaculture Action Network where we do these
Permaculture Action Days and set up these courses and workshops. So permaculture
comes from the words permanent and agriculture. Or even more broadly permanent
culture. Basically it’s looking at all. Basically it’s a holistic design science for how we
can create healthy human habitation. How can we interweave humans, people, ourselves,
back into the ecological system in such a way where we’re actually participating in
mutually beneficial relationships with the other members of the ecosystem around us,
with the ecosystem as a whole, with each other as people. So what it’s doing is looking at
the cultural point to which we’ve come, which is a culture of extraction and exploitation,
where we degrade the land-base through our activity. We extract resources and bring
them into a center point for use by people and then we throw them away when we’re
done using them. Basically we’re degrading the landscape and degrading total ecosystem
health and exploiting people and exploiting the natural world for short-term benefits. We
look at that culture and obviously we need to figure out a different way to be where we’re
actually regenerating the health of the ecosystem around us, creating mutually beneficial
relationships with each other as well as with the land-base. And so it looks at natural
principles and patterns that exist in ecosystems. Ok, so how do we distill down these
principles and patterns by which natural ecosystems function, by which forests function,
and rivers function and plains function? How can we apply those principles and patterns
that work in natural systems to the way that humans design their navigation, to the way
that humans design the systems by which they interrelate with the natural world. So it
includes all kinds of disciplines, you know, and it’s holistic so everything is
interconnected within this framework of permaculture. Where we’re talking about food
systems, we’re talking about water systems, we’re talking about regenerative agriculture,
we’re talking about food forests and edible forest gardens within water systems, we’re
talking about rainwater collection and reuse of greywater, we’re talking about earthworks
that harvest rainwater, we’re talking about medicinal plants and the use of fungi, we’re
talking about soil and compost and how to regenerate soil and build healthy topsoil,
we’re talking about natural building and how to create natural structures, we’re talking
about alternative energy. So it really is a very holistic framework and design science for
looking at all aspects of how to create an equally beneficial regenerative way of living.

So basically the Permaculture Action Tour was the start to all of this. In 2014 we
went on tour with The Polish Ambassador and that was the first time that we did any
specific work under that name. We went to 32 cities across the United States and in every
city we brought out local organizations from that city to the show that are working on
urban farming or food justice or permaculture in some way. We had them table at the
show and also had some folks from those organizations get up to speak at the shows and
basically tried to connect the people in the audience to these organizations that are in
their city and their community doing this work on the regular. And we also invited
everyone from the show out to an Action Day. So we invited everyone from the audience
from this urban venue to come out the next morning and take part in a community action
project where they could actually do something with their hands, something physical and
permanent in their community. So that included planting food forests and edible forest gardens in public parks, building greenhouses at urban farms and food justice projects, creating community farms and urban community gardens in the city in food desert neighborhoods where people don’t have access to healthy food, and all kinds of different projects. We did that in 32 cities so that obviously created a big spark for what came next. So then Envision Festival in Costa Rica wanted to do a Permaculture Action Day in conjunction with their festival. That was the first time we worked with a festival. So we had a couple hundred people come out to three elementary schools around the area and plant food forests and fruit trees and build gardens with the students at these schools. Then we worked with Lucidity after that and Lucidity was the first time that we did all three of these things that we offer now, which is, we did a 3-day Permaculture Action Course before the event where 35 people came and studied permaculture design and social change methodology with us and a group of teachers for 3 days and ten on the 4th day, which was the day before the festival, we had a Permaculture Action Day where about 100 people came, and they came to a place called Alpha Community Center and worked to put in a permaculture landscape at the center for adults with developmental disabilities. So 100 people showed up the day before Lucidity and planted fruit trees, built rainwater catchment earthworks, built edible and sensory gardens at the center. And during the festival itself we had the Permaculture Action Hub where we had from 9 in the morning to 7 o’clock every day the full three days of the event, skill-shares and workshops and classes going on where people can come learn about all kinds of things from seedball making and seed saving to design of edible forest gardens to natural building and actually make cob bricks and all kinds of things. We’re also doing a lot more social aspects to this than most permaculture education that I’ve seen include. There’s often classes on consensus decision-making and collaborative group dynamics and mediation and conflict resolution, like alternative forms of how we can take care of ourselves and community without relying on police or relying on the state. And how we can organize to create a better world and go up against these systems of power that are keeping the world we’re dreaming of at bay. So that’s what we started doing and we did a big Permaculture Action Day with Lightning in a Bottle festival like a month after that where we built a natural building, a cob classroom at an elementary school that was 5 miles from the festival site that fits 30 to 40 students. So this is using clay and sand and straw and water to build out of cob, which is this natural building material, like a full on outdoor classroom with a real piece of slate to make a slate chalkboard and a roof and a big circular cob bench around the whole thing. So we did this Action Day before Lightning in a Bottle (LIB) where we built this 30 student cob classroom there and so we continued to do this. We’re giving people 3 ways to engage. One is: come to an Action Day, give anything a chance once, show up for a day and get your hands in the dirt and actually physically create things and see how it feels to physically build these systems and get involved on that direct level and meet people while you’re there and have these conversations. Another way is: during an event that you’re already going to, like one of these festivals, drop in for a workshop or drop in for a skill-share. And the third way is: to actually come to a course where you’re spending 3-5 days or more really diving deep into a curriculum on this information and really studying it. So we’re giving people entry points through which to get engaged with this kind of work and our hope is that people get engaged in the long-term, like much beyond the events that we’re actually hosting.
We hope that people meet other folks in their community that are interested in the same things, they form their own organizations, form their own groups, they go off to organize direct actions on their own or get involved with some aspect of permaculture in their own lives on the regular. So we’re trying to give that educational and action-based experience through which people can get engaged with this work for the long-term. Of course we’d also like to see Action Days that we’re doing increase in potency. You know, the first Action Day we ever did was planting fruit trees at an elementary school and then 3 weeks later we’re building a greenhouse at an urban farm that used to be a landfill in the middle of the inner city in Denver and turning this place into a community farm with a big winter-safe greenhouse. And we’re trying to do actions where we’re taking over empty lots and turning them into community gardens and food forests. We want to see the potency of these actions increase where we’re creating more and more of these alternative systems that we need and also working to dismantle systems that are detrimental to the land-base and detrimental to human health and wellbeing. So we’d like to see the actual actions that we’re inviting people out to get more and more serious over time.

(Transformational Festivals) are the conversation point for a lot of people. It’s a place where a bunch of people can go converge and talk and have conversations. One thing that we’ve found with Action Days is that the reason it makes so much sense to have an Action Day after a show or have an Action Day before a festival is we’re catching people where they’re gathering in large numbers already. It’s the difference between being an activist in your hometown and trying desperately to flier around the street and get people to come out to an event and have most people ignore you or throw the flier on the ground, versus being at one of these shows where you’re handing out fliers for the Action Day the next day and half the people that take them from you are telling you that they’re already coming to it. It’s pretty incredible. Whatever way that we can move people in large numbers where they’re already gathering into potent direct action that actually helps to create a better world is great. The use of that cultural edge of art and music and performance to steer people in that direction and get people’s attention can also be hugely beneficial to the movement of the whole.

It’s about the “edge space” that that creates. You get a bunch of people who might not independently go seek out a permaculture design course and go travel and pay to go to that in itself. But you get a lot of people who are attracted to this festival culture and know that they want something different and know that they’re searching for solutions, searching for ways to integrate themselves into a better way of living, and into creating change, and they’re right on that “edge space” of being able to dive into something like that. But maybe not the folks who would go seek it out on their own time. So by giving people the opportunity to simply come a few days ahead of time and get a real deep educational experience around permaculture and other social change methodologies, or just to give people a space within the festival itself like the Permaculture Action Hub where people can just drop in for an hour session here or there and learn something and have conversations with other folks who are kind of on the same mental path around that kind of stuff, it’s a very catalyzing space where we can (have an) effect and provide more resources and more learning and an opportunity to connect with hundreds of people in a single weekend.
I have a lot of friends who are starting to look at the concept of having events where people actually are working on permanent improvements to the land-base during the event itself. So you’d attract a bunch of people to an event with some headliners of music and art and workshops and this kind of thing. But you’d also have people physically building natural buildings or working on water catchment systems or planting perennial food systems and doing soil improvement and doing all kinds of actual improvements to the land-base that will help people and will help regenerate the ecology during the event itself. And actually hold these events in a place where one could continue to work on that over the years. And there would be a much smaller amount of people holding down that space throughout the year when the event is not happening. That’s an intriguing idea. I haven’t seen anyone do it successfully yet but I know it’s on the tip of a lot of people’s tongues. Other than that, the events as they are right now, it’s a great convergence point for a bunch of different folks to learn from each other, to bring a whole bunch of different backgrounds and experiences and understandings into one place and have a dialogue and a conversation.

Fieldwork at Global Eclipse Gathering: Oregon Eclipse 2017

i. Aloka

My name is Aloka and I’ve been cross-pollinating and bridging the traditional Native American ceremonial ways in Transformational Festival culture for the last nine and a half years. I share my music and I also have helped tend fire, I’ve also been a part of festivals as a producer, putting together smaller transformational events in New York City for five years to larger events and retreats based around solutions. So booking different artists and also bringing in different elders that I work with and am connected to. Here, particularly at Oregon Eclipse, I came here to sit with my uncles and abuelas around this powerful moment in time and also to share ceremonial ways and my own music and teachings.

For a lot of people and for me these festivals are a fulfillment of prophecy. The Hopi Prophecy, the Rainbow Warrior, all these prophecies that talk about the time of the lone wolf is over and it’s time to come together and celebrate and do everything in a sacred way. My first festival was a Rainbow Gathering. Something about being in nature with other human beings without any electricity, you leave the patterns of your daily routine. Any time we have a pattern interruption we have the opportunity to introspect and reflect. Especially when we’re by the sacred fire or with other people that are prayerful we start to share codes, share perspectives, paradigms, share medicine, share energy. What I noticed for myself and in others that the world of Transformational Festivals is an acceleration of the individual and collective transformational process through the resonance of souls meeting each other, inspiring, supporting, and activating each other to go to the next level in some way. Where that meets the indigenous movement is that the Earth narrative, the story of Mother Earth and her time and where that meets our modern world right now: the First Nations are the original activists. They are an extension of Mother Earth herself. We all are as humans but particularly in that
signature that they’re carrying, they’re holding that story, they’re holding those songs that keep that connection.

Where mass gatherings and where a movement of protecting the sacred and preserving the sacred meet each other, the opportunity is that people come for music and they walk away with their life changed. Whether they walked into a workshop or they stumbled by the sacred fire on some kind of psychedelic and felt the frequency of the songs being played and had a heart opening or a healing, there’s all these powerful moments where the meeting of the two stimulate a deep remembrance within the soul of, “I belong to this Earth. There’s something bigger going on. There’s a bigger picture happening.” Which is that prophecy, these many prophecies that are unfolding.

For me, with Standing Rock happening, that was a culmination of a crucible. When China invaded Tibet it spread Buddhism across the Earth. In the same way that’s what happened with Standing Rock, it’s a crucible, it’s going to resurrect the indigenous wisdom on the Earth again. And the transformational community, being a very diverse community, it’s not black or white here, there’s many different sub-fractal, sub-cultural representatives here, and there are those of us within the Transformational Festival movement that are specifically holding that bridge to the indigenous community and that have intended to create sacred space at these events since the beginning. And other people have other roles and they all work together. And that’s the cool thing about it too is that there’s an opportunity to discover what your gift, what your role, how you fit into the sacred hoop of life so to speak from a Native perspective, where that lives in the festival.

The bridge that we’re at right now is the opportunity to mend our relations. The healing of the nations is a prophecy. The opportunity for First Nations and Rainbow Nation, if you will, the nation of many colors, creeds, spiritual paths coming together to create solutions and to shift the overall modern narrative out of the 9-5, four white walls, capitalist, consumer, colonial distortion field into an Earth-based, community-based, resource/value-shared culture.

**Medicine** from my elder means the power of your intention. How much faith you give your intention, that’s medicine. That can come in the form of a plant, that can come in the form of a song, that can come in the form of pure speech of supporting someone else through compassion, it’s the power of your intention, that’s medicine. The *Seventh Generation* is a prophecy of the Lakota that the seventh generation would kill the black snake so to speak and end the colonial agenda. The *Rainbow Prophecy* is that when the water turns black, which is the oil spills, when the birds fall from the sky, there’s all these other signs, the young people will take up our ways and grow their hair long and teach humanity how to pray again. And they will come from the many corners of the Earth and they will be known as the Rainbow Warriors. That succincts with the teachings of the dharma of the Tibetans that say that the Bodhisattva, one who has walked many different lifetimes, keeps choosing to come back. So to me the rainbow prophecy and the teachings of the Bodhisattva are interconnected. So someone who’s truly in the frequency of the rainbow warrior is aware of their identity as a soul that has walked many lineages and is not just picking from things and playing around but has truly recalled that part of themselves back from those lifetimes in service to this narrative now of the Earth of helping resurrect the sacred, for humanity, for the preservation of the Earth. The *Eagle Condor Prophecy*, there’s a lot of cool interpretations of this. For me personally I ended
up down in Costa Rica in 2008, started sitting in ceremonies there where the medicine of the south which is the yagé or the ayahuasca and the medicine of the north which is the peyote starting to be shared and the teachings and the ways of the north and south being shared amongst each other as a resurrection and reconnecting the lines of the north and the south. So you have South American shaman going and doing Lakota Sundances and Lakotas going down and drinking ayahuasca in the jungle and all this cross-pollination of sacred plant medicines and songs and teachings that are resurrected. So that was a fulfillment of prophecy. And what’s cool about indigenous teachings and prophecy is that when there’s something cross-cultural, when someone in the jungle has had a vision of a white bear and has never actually seen it but knows that there’s a white bear in the north, that’s pretty cool there are white bears in the north, they’re polar bears. And someone in the Inuit tribe in the north has had a vision of a black cat in the jungle in his dream and has never seen it, it doesn’t mean that it doesn’t exist, right. There’s a mythos of the dream world, and of the natural world, and of the spirit world, that is preserved that’s cross-cultural. And that goes for all people. My ancestors were Druids, the Germanic tribes, the colonial energy went from wiping out the Druids to going across all of Europe and wiping out the Germanic tribes. That energy, that frequency then came to Turtle Island. So we’re ending a 500-year to even longer year timeline of the persecution of tribal culture. So when we use the word tribe we’re saying the return to a type of tribal culture. Tribal culture including a clear relationship with the Earth, a clear relationship with the cosmos, spiritual energy, a clear relationship to community that is not egocentric or self-serving but honoring of the whole. New Earth means what’s on the other side of the old paradigm, what’s emergent, eco-villages, new currencies, new models of relating, anything that is the resolution of the distortion of the old evolving and transforming into the new.

I believe that the Native elders that get attracted to these gatherings have transcended a type of dogma that allows them know that we need to heal. There’s a welcoming to connect to that part of oneself that is indigenous. Whatever that is, whatever your background is or culture. So All Nations from All Directions meaning the teaching of the four directions of the nations were in the beginning of the time there was a different color corn. Mayans talk about humanity came out of the corn, there’s many different creation stories. So there’s the white corn people, the yellow corn people, the blue corn people, all these different colors and what their responsibility was. So if you break it down, the four main root races were each assigned a sacred element. So the black race, the black nation if you will, was assigned the water. The red nation if you will was assigned the Earth. The white nation was assigned the fire and the yellow nation the air. So this is original teachings, original creation story. What happened? The white nation took the fire and went with it and it imbalanced everything. So now we’re healing that, the four colors again coming back into harmony. It’s a different angle to speak of the Rainbow Prophecy.

So the welcoming nature here allows people to belong. Every human being has a deep need to belong. Many of us who struggled with the contemporary paradigm or cultural narrative or upbringing, or the foods that we were fed, the educations that we were given, and how self-destructive it actually is and how destructive it is to the Earth and the energy that’s actually behind it, and longing for something else and then finding it. What this scene provides is an alternative to our present paradigm but there’s enough
diversity for an individual to discover how they would like to participate within it. Creativity is a foundation here. There’s so much art, there’s so much music, there’s so much to be inspired by, beauty, every facet of any kind of creative expression in the arts is here. Which is amazing to have a culture that is that diverse that is inclusive of all the genres if you will of artistic expression. Then you have all the workshops and the diversity of all the solutions that offered from permaculture, to yoga, to dance, to mysticism, to neo-indigenous wisdom, to traditional indigenous wisdom, the gamut. There’s such a wide range of subcultures or genres or demographics even within this that it is the emerging culture of our planet.

The evolution is grounding these spaces as permanent residences, eco-villages is what I’ve seen and what many people have received in vision and in dream and in prayer is to create permanent sites where we can live this way throughout the year. It will be a vast network of eco-villages and festivals that will gradually shift out of a consumer focus into a solution-based focus. For example, in 2014 I went with Jamaica Stevens, Clayton Gaar, and David Casey, NuMundo, Tribal Council, Tribal Convergence Network and I was associated with them as Unitribe and we formed Tribal Alliance which was a 200 person leadership immersion in Costa Rica specifically focused on how do we transition festivals in the direction of creating permanent eco-villages. That dialogue is continuing and I’ve seen it fractal out. Polish Ambassador got his idea for the Permaculture Action Tour when he was there. All these things emerged out of that meeting. So when we come to these places again we council, it’s different than being on Facebook or texting someone, you actually get to sit with them and drop in and what comes through.

These places will be catalysts for connection to then come up with what is the most emergent next set of choices for the individuals and collective to make for the betterment of that collective vision that we’re moving towards which is living in harmony with the Earth, creating new currencies and ways of value that are not contributing to the old culture and societal conditioning of consumerism that takes from the Earth and destroys the Earth. The evolution of this scene is moving into a more healthy less druggie, more solution-based, more indigenous wisdom informed movement where we sit in council like we did in the old days and we come up with solutions. We recognize that there’s a threat. Like what happened in the old days when the colonial forces came in and warring tribes had to get along. It’s the same thing that’s happening right now. The threat is the corporate American distortion field and the industrial military complex. That’s our threat to tribal life and so we have to embrace the vast diversity of tribal culture and tribal people and neotribal people in the face of that threat. Just like you would in a microcosm 500 years ago or 400 years ago against an invading army that is an invasion of consciousness and it also translates physically. That’s what we’re up against and it’s not about fighting it in the same way. Yes, we have to take activist approaches and it’s about birthing and creating and nurturing a whole new model.

Buckminster Fuller says, you know, how do you render an old system obsolete is you create a better one, a new one. There are people who come at it from a “break down Babylon walls and fuck the system” approach and then there are people that are like “I’m going to create the new system” and those people are interfacing right now and we’re all in discovery. We’re figuring out how we can work together.
For me, the last thing that I would share is part of what informs my personal narrative and what I’m most fascinated with and excited by is our individual soul evolutionary journey within the collective awakening process of the planet. What that means is where we get to claim ourselves day to day in relationship. As we do that and we heal the hidden parts of our lineage that are stuck in pain or shame or blame or shadow, we actually have enough mirrors everywhere in this scene to illuminate the places that we haven’t seen in ourselves to heal, which will create a new expression externally by the Laws of the Universe, the Laws of Attraction, as we change our internal resonance the outside has to change. So these powerful gatherings offer enough reflections for people to have to look at themselves and have enough support to feel safe enough to let grief through that they’ve never let through, to have enough support to allow themselves to be seen without their ego masking for a moment, and that creates a new seed for that person. That’s a profound aspect of these gatherings that I’ve been tracking because being a part of production teams and being an artist and all of the different roles I’ve played, at the end of the day, when you seek to create a vision and you set out to accomplish bringing an idea or something that came from spirit and bringing it all the way into form into 3D, the expectations of your personality and what actually has to happen are different. So in that way we can all be humble to the reality that we’re in a collective discovery process of growth and that we’re going to bump into things that we have to look at and resolve in order to create this new culture. That’s exciting because it creates an equal playing field for everyone to be included and also to be right where they are in their process of discovery and healing as a soul and for us to truly support each other in that journey.

*Out-picturing* is the highest alchemy I believe as co-creator beings that we can exercise. A Visionary artist gets a download for a painting that holds a certain high vibrational spiritual frequency that can move someone to tears once it’s actually fully on that canvas. An example is this gathering was an idea. Someone was like let’s get these other production companies together and let’s create an international gathering for this massive eclipse. What happened? They had to go through a process of different community leaders and lead producers having to meet together and work together for the first time. There’s a massive influx of people that had to wait in line for thirteen hours to get in here and go through an initiation. None of those people could have preconceived or known that that was going to happen as a result of bringing this into fruition. That’s the bigger picture of something much greater than all of us that’s a part of the evolutionary process. I like what David Block says, he might have been quoting someone else but he’s the most recent person I’ve heard say it: “We’re dancing between time and eternity.”

So in the creation process of bringing a vision into form, we play with the no-mind and the timelessness of our inherent nature and third dimensional reality in linear time. That interfacing, for the time that we’re living in, that’s what we’re learning how to master as a visionary community. It’s not to just stay up in the Spirit World, and then the distortion of the other world it’s not just to stay in 3D: money, money, money, grind, grind, grind, self-preservation, self-preservation, self-preservation. No connection to Spirit or all Spirit and no connection to Earth and linear time, taking care of yourself, you can’t pay your rent on time. So the healing is that meeting of both where we can have an integrated system where we’re deeply connected to Spirit and we’re also very clear with the physical consequences of our choices and how these systems and operations of
relating happens. That journey of bringing vision into form is an alchemical journey. It
addresses the entire nervous system of the individual, each chakra. You get the download
in the crown, you see it in your mind’s eye, you start to talk about it, you feel the reality
of it and you feel connected to it, and then most people when it hits third chakra, the will
to act on it and self-identity they check out and go back up for another vision. Once you
pass that, drop down to second chakra, you start to nurture it, and boom, it drops down to
first chakra and you birth it. So that seven chakra journey of Spirit to form has to move
through every chakra and therefore address the shadow pieces and the shadow energies
within that chakra in order for that vision to come through. Some people have more
mastery in certain areas, so as a collective, we’re in a growth edge as a collective culture
of how to bring in this much bigger vision that we’re all a part of and we’re all just in
discovery of and we’re each bringing our piece of the puzzle.

ii. Jacob Devaney

My name is Jacob Devaney and I love festival culture and have spent many years
attending festivals, working at festivals and what I love about it is that it’s an evolving
cultural landscape. I feel like it’s a realm, that’s not really just about a party, it’s a realm
where people get to go and express their highest self, their most creative essence gets to
come out. And traditionally that’s what it was about, pow wows and potlatch, celebrating
the seasons and celebrating life and dance and drum and story and camping and being on
the earth. In our capitalistic culture it kind of evolved into just a concert where you go to
a stadium and buy beer or whatever. But the visionary festival scene is taking people
back to the land and it’s combining the best elements of indigenous wisdom which all
have deep in our ancestry in our bones and our DNA and combining it with modern art,
modern technology and cultural expression. It’s a creative lab, it’s a real opportunity for
people to go and dream new ways of being and learn how to manifest it. You can go and
learn permaculture and see beautiful art, it’s all just about inspiration. So we need a little
dream bubble to help push the edges of our culture to help it evolve in creative ways and
festivals are a great way to do that.

So that’s where I come from. I grew up around a lot of live music. My dad liked
the Grateful Dead, I used to love the Grateful Dead and go and see the Grateful Dead.
That was a traveling aspect of it that took a lot of the 60s culture and carried it forward
for the next generation.

And then I co-founded Unify with a group of other friends that basically wanted
to use technology to coordinate people globally to drop in at the exact moment,
synchronized moment, around the world to pray or mediate or hold a space or vibration
for love and healing and peace. We know that there’s already a lot of outlets that are
broadcasting fear and division and chaos so it’s up to us to create our own network to
broadcast love and joy and safety and hope and inspiration. So that’s why we started
Unify.

We can’t do anything in this world without paying homage to the root. So
whether it’s the corn or the peach on the tree, if we can’t think holistically and understand
the root that stuck itself into the ground and grabbed nutrients and grew for years and
years in order to be able to create that peach, we don’t really see the whole picture. This
transformational culture in a lot of ways is like the peach, it’s this beautiful expression
but it can’t realize it’s full potential and power without acknowledging the roots that it comes from and the roots that it comes from is indigenous culture. We are all indigenous. If you have white skin you are still indigenous to this planet, you still had ancestors that grew food, that hunted and gathered, that gathered around the campfire all winter, that migrated when there was a drought, that made beautiful costumes and danced, that traded and bartered with other tribes, it’s in all of us. If we’re wanting to that again now, we need to pay homage to those who have kept the indigenous ways alive. And the process of doing that isn’t as simple as saying, “Hey come to our big festival,” it’s really a process of acknowledging colonialism, acknowledging the wounds from history, the genocide, learning their culture so that we can respect their protocol and so forth. So there’s a real learning and a real evolution in that, but in that we get to realize the full tree down to the roots. And that is what’s happening right now and it’s very beautiful. In a lot of ways the visionary festival culture was not fully in a place, I don’t think, we weren’t evolved enough really to fully do that until recently, in the last couple years.

It does go way back with Rolling Thunder who was an indigenous elder who was the medicine man of the Grateful Dead and there has been crossover between the hippie progressive art culture and the indigenous, it’s always been there but now it’s really coming into a place of realization. Having the teepes here, having the council fire here, and the friendships that are developed through doing this and them seeing how much we really respect them and even if we have awkward ways and do things wrong that we’re coming from the right place in our heart. There’s more and more friendship and trust and healing. And it goes both ways. Even with indigenous people that come here it’s not just, oh, we have everything to learn from you, they’re learning from us as well. That’s part of growth and evolution and healing so the root gets to enjoy the fruit as well.

Unify started in 2012 and we were all very inspired by indigenous wisdom. We were aware of the Mayan Calendar and that December 21st 2012 is supposed to be the end of the Mayan Calendar. We saw how much was being misrepresented, they made a film about the end of the world, and so I worked with Steve Copland on the Shift of the Ages, which was a film about the Mayan prophecies. And I worked with other elders and their actual version of the prophecies was quite different than the sensationalized end of the world. And so a group of us got together and we said we need to bust this fear mongering around the shifting of the ages and usher in a beautiful vision. So we decided that we were going to do a beginning of the world celebration. We had friends from the Do Lab who had an event at the Giza pyramids, we had friends that were going to be at Stonehenge and we had in our larger network, the visionary festival network, we had people who were going to be at sacred sites all over the world. It was very powerful and beautiful but we hadn’t thought much past it we just knew that we needed to do that. Then we got a huge following and a lot of interest and we realized we need to keep going and keep doing this. So we can’t have a conversation about sacred sites for very long without involving indigenous people. Otherwise you’re just contributing to colonialism and co-opting that.
So that was the beginning of formalizing our deeper connections and using Unify as a platform to broadcast the message of Arvol Looking Horse for protecting sacred sites. We can all have a vision and work towards that though when you have somebody who literally has a pipe that passed was down 19 generations with a message, you know, that’s for him to, he’s the rightful person, he’s the keeper of an ancient tradition. We did that for him: The Voice of Water. We worked with Hopi elders and Hopi youth. We went in and said we want to amplify your wisdom and your voice, it’s not our movie, it’s a collaboration. We have technology, we have the global network, let’s work together and share this. And they all had their own stories and prophecies that at a certain time the world would be ready for what we know. So the collaboration is needed on both ends, nobody leads it, it’s a unified effort and collaboration. So that’s how that evolved.

The next evolution is going to be a further integration with the technology. With the blockchain we have the ability to do peer to peer democracy, peer to peer economy and by decentralizing we’re going to take the strangle hold off the oligarchs that are doing everything in their power to keep us from evolving to the next level because they’re afraid that they’ll lose their place of power if the whole social structure shifts. So there will be more integration with technology, with the internet, with the cryptocurrency and using blockchain. And then there will be more formalized educational centers as well, dome villages setup in cities where there’s a constant visionary festival happening, where we’re bring in artists and musicians and visual painters and scientists and indigenous elders and doing workshops on a regular basis like the same way that Repertory Theatre will bring all the latest stuff from Broadway, we’ll be doing that kind of thing but it will be like a university with permaculture workshops and living eco-villages that are developing and growing inside of and right outside of urban centers to slowly start raising the conscious and the technology and the tools to shift our mainstream society to a more visionary conscious community that understands the interconnectedness between the systems of nature and so forth. So what we’re saying now is that sustainability is out. If we had done that 50 years ago it would have been a great idea but we didn’t. So what we’re really needing right now is we’re needing to evolve regenerative culture. Take the waste and take the ruin that humanity has created and recycle it into something beautiful. That’s the direction we want to go in.

iii. Danny Saggers

My name is Danny and what I do in terms of services and offerings that take up most of my energy and time is serving kambo, a medicine from the Amazon rainforest. Also really studying naturopathy and nutrition and working with that modality as well with people. And traveling and new experiences and broadening the horizons of all aspects of life.

I think it’s a really powerful next step in the evolution to be bringing the indigenous elders into these Transformational Festivals: one for the space holding, for their energy that they embody and they can bring energetically into the festival. To give some people that may not have necessarily ever thought to look into indigenous peoples and their ways. A chance to, you know, they stroll across the bridge, they’re in the 1Nation Camp and they’re exposed to new ways of being that maybe they’ll choose to explore, maybe they won’t, but at least it’s there within the vicinity of their consciousness.
to explore if they feel moved to. I definitely feel that we’re trying to integrate the two, it helps the evolution of it and the space holding of the whole festival, trying to tie it all together. It’s what’s happening on the entire planet where we’ve got the medicines coming out of the jungle, coming out of their indigenous lands and spreading across the globe to people who would’ve never had any interaction with this ancient knowledge. It’s helping to wake humanity up and heal the sickness that is in the mind of most people in the West.

It’s a wonderful melting pot for different people to come together to share these new paradigm shifting ideas. It’s an incredible chance for us to bring together all of these new concepts and ideas and marinate them together and share to dynamically interact and inspire one another. I was just at a workshop yesterday where we were talking about how can we then take that back out and how can we embody that into our communities and share that. It’s a real gift to be able to come into these spaces, let all the shit drop away, we’re all offline and the phones don’t work and it’s just pure synchronicities from the universe where we end up getting into the flow. Dropping out and dropping in to experience what needs to be experienced and coming out with new ways of thinking and new ways of being. Even myself, I’ve done a lot of work and had a lot of experiences, and this has been a Transformational Festival.

This is the breeding ground for the future of humanity. We can take what we learn in these hot pots of information out and bring that to the communities that don’t come out to these Transformational Festivals, that don’t know about them, that don’t have the chance, the opportunity, the financial abundance possible to get involved in these things then we can be a conduit to carry that information and disseminate to the rest.

I think it’s incredibly beautiful. I’ve been over to the 1Nation Earth Camp a couple of times now and you just feel that energy as soon as you get there, the integrity, the maturity, the space being held. It’s just a wonderful addition to this festival’s experience. Incredible different elders from Native American tribes that have come together to unify and hold down the space here. Going forward it’s something that should be happening more and more in festivals. We both met at Tribal Gathering (Panama) and that was going on there and it seems that more and more Transformational Festivals are bringing in people from around the world that have this information. Like the Huni Kuin Kaxinawá, the Yawanawá, indigenous peoples from Mexico, Native Americans, it’s beautiful. It really adds to the experience. Especially people who are more inclined to the medicine path, people who are more sensitive, not so much wanting to be right in the thick of it with the music all the time. That’s a really nice place to go and just feel held with your people, our tribe.

From what I’m aware of the prophecy of the Eagle and the Condor meeting at that time when the North and the South come together, the sons and daughters of the white people start flying around the world like arrows and learning the indigenous traditions and spreading that knowledge of this new time of unity, unifying the collective. And it’s happening, we see it happening. I’ve seen many other brothers and sisters from all different walks of life and different countries, all this eclectic diversity of people are being called onto the medicine path and are being transformed through working with traditional plant medicines. Yeah, the prophecy is happening and it’s beautiful to see what’s going on right now.
I can honestly say that with everyone I’ve worked with, with the except of one weird experience, generally the people I’ve worked with have been really open and welcoming and happy to share their medicines, their knowledge and really pleased that the Western demographic is opening up and being called in to receive these teachings, to work with these medicines and to have access to this wisdom from their elders. Out of anyone, any people I’ve been exposed to in my life thus far, it’s the elders from these indigenous communities that have this innate connection to nature, this ancient wisdom, who have shared the most wonderful teachings and lessons to my ears. The words are like music and beautiful poetry. I haven’t, in my experience, heard that so much from elders in the West. That’s not meant to be derogatory or condescending, that’s merely just to say that perhaps within their experience they haven’t had access to that kind of wisdom. If I think of my grandparents’ generation, there was the war and everything was about work. Work, earn money, buy a house. Then my parents’ generation was similar, where I’m from anyways, a lot of the focus is working and getting your house and all those things. Now it’s starting to switch, I see it in the generation coming before me and my generation. Because of the work they did the world has opened up where we can fly around, we have more freedom, and there’s different ways to be. The world has opened up. There are much more more options. The teachings that I’ve been able to access due to the work of my previous generations to allow me this freedom has been wonderful.

iv. Andrew Ecker

I come here in a good way to share with you and talk about my part in the festival culture and how festival culture has influenced me and also about bringing these traditional ways and also this metaphysical architecture of rainbow into the festival culture. How we talk about prophecy, how we assert ourselves in creating culture. I feel myself to be a cultural architect in a certain sense along with many people apart of this movement. I myself went to my first Rainbow Gathering in 1997 right here in Oregon and I was really touched by the power of the rainbow coming together to play the drum in a good way, intentional programming of the vibration of the drum. This is synonymous with the tribal technology of playing the drum specifically for a ceremonial practice.

In the work I do now, as a professional drum circle facilitator, I have a company called Drumming Sounds out of Phoenix, Arizona where we’re based. Primarily we work in hospitals, so we work in memory care, we work in skilled nursing, psychiatric lock-downs, behavioral units, cancer facilities, we work in schools to bring this wisdom of the drum in a ceremonial practice to transcend the idea of the institution and create community. So in our hearts there’s this idea of community and a worldview of production for the means of restoration. Producing to restore peoples, families, community and the planet, which I feel is synonymous with an ancient prophecy that the Hopi and many indigenous tribes held to that during a time when the air, the water, the fire, the earth, were needing relationship with the human beings, that there would be from all four corners, all colors of the spectrum of humanity, come together to bring their medicine, their ancient ways, to a new place in which all ceremony can sit in the same circle. Which is something we’re designing now within the metaphysical architecture of our reality. We’re saying, “I want to see this.” We have a hunger for people to come together, and as we hunger for that we ask the questions, “Why are people coming
together? Why are people sitting in ceremony? Why are we living an abundant life?” We see visions inside of this place. We see a vision of humanity coming together to utilize the air, the water, the fire, the earth, for complete restoration, a restoration of our culture and our values. Right now we live in a container of values that many of us are still caught up in the illusion of consumerism, the idea that we can produce to consume, and in producing to consume we have forgotten in a certain way the idea of reciprocity. So in this day that we’re in, this time in our lives we’re in a time of restoring and coming up with technologies to restore the air, the water, the fire, the earth. I feel like we’re in a place where in our lifetimes I believe we will begin to see gardens on the outsides of the buildings. We’ll begin to see the cities become carbon vacuums rather than carbon producing cities and the farmlands, the monoculture, will turn back into wildlands. It’s been said that when the people begin to drum and dance in a ceremonial way, in an intentional way, that we will see the restoration of the air, the water, the fire, the earth. We’re seeing a movement now with the Water Protectors, with Standing Rock, with people saying I am that person, I am willing to give my wealth to a movement to restore our planet. And in that way we honor the indigenous because the indigenous people are the representation of the earth. So as we honor the indigenous people we honor the earth. It’s important for us to have that conversation, to say that we are going to do ceremony, that we’re going to practice in a way that brings harmony back.

We produce an event called NeoTribal, this is our fourth year, and it’s a four-day event in which we do an environmental restoration piece for the earth. We go in and we target a specific plant called the tamarix tree that was introduced here from the Middle East that secretes a biochemical that kills indigenous plants. We go in with the veterans and we remove that plant, harnessing the power of our military forces to do environmental restoration, which I really feel is the reason for our military. Our military may look like something of destruction but ultimately I feel that in our New Earth the military technology will be used to harness the power of restoration. So we do this the first day in our small community in Arizona and then the second day we have the wind ceremony in which we honor a group of elders from senior centers that service the Native American community and also the refugee community. And we bring them out and we serve them a lunch and we give them a blanket. The blanket is very symbolic because the first ever biological warfare that was done was done through smallpox-laden blankets to Native American people. Some people say that 30 million Native Americans died because of that smallpox, because of the decimation of biological warfare. So we in turn talk about biological warfare that was done through blankets with the contemporary community, giving a safe place to have that discussion, to take the veil off of the white elephant that we’ve excused and not confronted in our culture and in doing that we give an opportunity to tie prayers into the blankets that then will be given to the elders. The third day we do a water ceremony, that a procession is lead from a specific place in Arizona called the Estrella Mountain Regional Park.

I’m sharing with you these ceremonial practices to give you an idea of how we’re utilizing the indigenous technology in the contemporary, so this will give you an idea of how we’re taking ceremonial practices and unifying and bring together multiple tribes, multiple wisdoms, and creating contemporary ceremonial practices, which I feel is a huge conversation inside of the festival community, because we have a container inside the
festival community of culture I call *neo-tribal* culture. Neo-tribal culture is the idea of utilizing the ancient wisdoms in a new practice. So that’s what we do at NeoTribal.

On the third day we lead a procession from the river with water and we take the water and we put it on an altar, and we also have a container of Sedona drinking water, and we dance and drum around these waters imparting our own heart space of energy to the waters for restoration. People drink the water and there’s amazing healings. The container of river water goes back to the river to say, “We are joining with you Water, we hear you, we know you, we want to have relationship with you.” We pour the water back into the river and it joins with the global lifeblood of the planet. On the fourth day we take the parts of the tree that we removed and we do a fire ceremony. We create a phoenix, a bird, out of the remnants of that tree and we do a friction fire. We light it on fire and we dance and drum until sunset. So this idea around creating ceremonial practices is very important inside of the container of transformational music festivals because you have a remnant group that are holding to these spiritual practices that are saying to the wisdom keepers, “We want to learn from your practice and we want to take it and we to create something personal. We want to utilize that wisdom in our own lives. We want to be able to think like the shamanic people, we want to be able to think like the medicine people.” They may not be from a specific tribal ethnocentric form, in other words, there may be people that are here that are from Europe, that are from Africa, that have Native American blood, that have an alchemy of bloodlines, but we are practicing creating a safe space for everyone to join together. That’s why the vehicle of the drum circle is so important to me because it’s one of those sacred spaces where the Native American hand drum can be played with the African djembe, with the Latin drum, with the Middle Eastern drum, with the taiko drums and the Asians drums and all of us can come together to practice being one, and utilizing our own individuality in a safe space to create an energetic displacement and manifestation. We’re displacing the ideas that we can’t be in ceremony together. The dogma and the religious ideas leave and there is a quality that is created inside of the drum circle.

I can share with you over my twenty plus years of facilitating drum circles, I have done over three thousand drum circle in my life and I have seen miracles happen through this wisdom. I’ve seen people who were not able to speak for six years be able to speak. I’ve seen grandmas who are caught up in Alzheimer’s and all kinds of what we call mental illness in contemporary culture be instantly activated through a song as simple as “You Are My Sunshine” because the songs carry vibrational frequency. In our Apache tradition it’s been taught to me that the medicine can literally sing the broken bones back together. I haven’t witnessed this in my life yet but I have seen a broken mind come back together. So that is my offering to the transformational music festival culture is the drum circle. Here at the Eclipse I’ve been doing drum circles with the children, I’ve been working with Sacred Fire and I’ve been really valuing the container that this festival has created in giving us a place to practice. To practice being one, to practice ceremony, to practice coming into an authentic place of our human condition and to live our optimal state and that’s what I really value about this system of ceremony out in the wilderness to come together. Let’s share music, let’s share food, let’s share all of the five intimate expressions of human design: making love, making music, praying, eating food together, and dancing. There is nothing more intimate than that and inside of the
container of transformational music festivals I see all five intimate expressions of life. It’s beautiful to see the vulnerability and intimacy happen within human beings.

I really believe the intention behind the ceremonial practices of the indigenous wisdom keepers that are at the 1Nation Earth Camp was to help us begin to practice these traditional wisdoms in the contemporary. In other words, it’s a window. It is a physical bridge over there but there’s also a metaphysical bridge and if we can bridge these ancient technologies that we all know are wisdom inside of our DNA. We all know sitting with the fire, there’s a certain thing that happens with the fire. You begin to sit with the fire and the fire begins to crackle to the conversation that’s going on in your mind, the logs fall at a certain space inside of the conversation in your mind, the animals begin to show themselves, all of these parts of our reality begin to formulate inside of the conversation in our minds. I really feel that when we listen deeply to the wisdom of the ancestors, when we listen to those who through the struggle of colonialism held onto these ceremonial practices, we can apply that in a personal way to our own lives. When we apply it in a personal way to our own lives it becomes authentic. I believe that this bridge, I would call it a rainbow bridge in a certain sense to those ancient wisdoms and also to the many wisdom keepers that have come here from many Nations. There are multiple Nations that are represented in this Ancestral Arts/First Nations Camp. There are too many for me to talk about, I don’t know all of them to be honest with you, but I know they left communities, they left people who call them up and come to their home and knock on the door and ask for healing. I myself had to leave my community in Arizona to be here, people that are in hospitals and also my community of friends and family that call upon me to pray with them, to burn cedar with them, to have ceremony with them, to be here. And this is something of a sacrifice for the indigenous wisdom keepers and it’s something they see as important just as I see it as important, to come out into a larger canvas, to come out into a larger collective consciousness and to utilize also the energy of the people dancing. The people dancing, singing and playing songs, there’s always been a remnant few within tribal communities that take that energy and become a conduit to serve the greater collective. I feel that a lot of the wisdom keepers that are in the First Nations Camp are doing that for all of us. We may not know that they’re doing that for all of us but they are and this is a very important conversation to have. As far as the many Nations that are here I would say that it is a rainbow of Nations and wisdom keepers. I’ve seen people from Japan, I’ve seen people from all over North America and South America and Central America sharing wisdom by that fire and it’s a beautiful thing to witness, and also our brothers from Africa and amazing European people as well. Wisdom keepers from all over the planet coming into a container we call First Nations because these are the first nations of the earth, these are the nations without borders, these are the nations that simply say that we are earthlings. We come from a specific tradition but ultimately we’re all from the earth.

I can give you my synopsis of the Rainbow Prophecy. There are many Rainbow Prophecies but the one that really speaks to me at this moment is on a rock in Hopi Nation. I’m not Hopi so I can’t speak specifically of what this rock says but the way that I interpret what I have been taught from many different tribal elders is that there would be a time when the earth, the air, the water, the fire are calling us into relationship. From the four corners, from every color, every nation that there would be a tribe that would emerge to utilize the ancient technologies of drumming, singing, dancing, prayer and ceremony
to bring a transformative energy to the planet, to bring humanity itself back into relationship with the elements and with Spirit. I feel like that is what we are doing, that we are doing that. Even some of us that don’t really know about the prophecy have been called to the metaphysical architecture. Now when we speak about metaphysical architecture what we’re speaking about is like a blanket. It’s a blanket that covers those that come underneath it. So as we hear more about the prophecies we come under the metaphysical architecture that’s been fortified through wisdom keepers, through shamans, through medicine people all over the world singing and praying of a time in which we come back into relationship with the air, the water, the fire, the earth. So this metaphysical architecture exists in a state of beingness that is beyond the linear conceptualization of time. In other words, the fortification of this prophetic architecture is limitless in its spatial energy. It’s limitless yet it is at this time that we are seeing it being revealed. You know, when the wisdom keepers spoke of people coming that were of different colors wearing feathers in their hair and beating the drum, they didn’t know at that time what that meant, they’d just seen it in their minds and yet now is the time in which that is happening. We see the people from Europe, we see the people from Africa, Native American people, all of the people of the earth, that have been under the confusion of colonialism, of the culture of production for the means of consumption. All of these ideas, these ideas of you being a job. At some point in humanity’s existence people came into the castles, they gave up their identity with the land. They said I am the person of the Clan of the Tall Trees and then they became the smith, they became the parson, they became the knight. And when this happened there was a huge shift in humanity’s consciousness because instead of being connected to the earth you then became connected to a job. And when you became connected to a job it created this idea that people are not enough without a job. And we tell our children “what are you going to be when you grow up” as if they’re not enough now. We go into schools and we go into debt to work for someone else. It’s really a crazy illusion that we’re in! Yet this is the state in which we recognize the tools that have been given to us, the ideas, the concepts, all of these things so that we can break away from this, so that we can become once again earthlings. That for me is what the Rainbow Prophecy is about. That we can all come into agreement that we are here on this planet to produce to restore people, families, community, and the planet.

I feel that when we begin to institute a value system, values are very important, and if we begin to value the earth, the air, the water, and the fire we become greedy about that. See greed is a condition within humanity that a lot of people look at and are appalled by it. But me I see energetic potential. I see the potential to become greedy for clean water, to become greedy for clean earth, food, clean food, to become greedy for clean air and to become greedy with clean energy. As we begin to transcend the festival community in this practice I believe that we are going to step into a state in which we go into the cities and we begin to create this value system, that we begin to create the way of beauty in our cities.

My vision is that the greatest transference of wealth ever recorded in history is the baby boomer generation selling their houses and tapping into their 401ks. I work primarily in retirement communities, I’ve been a keynote for the Arizona Senior Center Association twice, the Arizona Therapeutic Recreation Association, the Arizona Activity Coordinators Association twice, and the Arizona Assisted Living Federation I’ve spoken
at twice. Now what I see is that retirees will begin to utilize the value system that their children are imparting to them. Hey, guess what, medication can lead you into a state of captivity. Clean food, clean water, clean air and clean energy can lead you into a state of sovereignty. I believe that we’re going to begin to see hydroponic gardens and vertical gardens on the outside of retirement communities. And then ultimately we all will retire from a system that no longer serves us, because if we can begin to institutionalize this conceptualization of what we built here (Oregon Eclipse 2017) in the matter of a few weeks, into the cities, we have the technology. We have the technology to live not just sustainable but regenerative and to grow food in the urban setting. It’s just a matter of time before we see gardens on the outside of the bank buildings. I say the banks own the buildings but we own the energy behind that. We own the energy that creates the metaphysical architecture of the trueness of the value system in which those buildings were built. All over the world I believe that we’re going to harness the power of water again. If we can do that we can see the immense prophetic word that the rainbow has told us we will see. It’s the time now.

My ancestral tradition goes back to the Apache and we have a beautiful dance called the Ga’an dance, it’s a very ceremonial dance. Apaches out of most Native American tribes fought colonialism for a long time and our dance is not shared with anyone other than Apaches. The Lakota, they shared their dance called the Sundance and this is one of their most ceremonial practices. Now you’ll find Sundances being done in Europe, you’ll find Sundances being done in South America, Africa, all over the world that dance is being done. And when they shared that dance the people felt the energy of the Lakota and they came to answer their prayer. They came to Standing Rock. I believe this is a conversation for all indigenous communities. You see in South America now the sharing of the ayahuasca, the sharing of the hapé, the sharing of the different medicinal herbs and medicines from South America. Because with the sharing of the medicine the people feel the connection to the indigenous and they are awoken again to be Water Protectors, to be Earth Protectors, to be Fire Protectors, to be Air Protectors. All of these wisdoms are coming from the sharing of the ancestral medicines. It’s an important conversation. My dear brother and elder in a certain sense Chase Iron Eyes shared. I spoke with him about the sharing of the Sundance and I know that he resonates with this conversation. When he says that, “There is no time” it’s true. There is no time left. We are now. It’s a now conversation.

I envision that we are leaving this metaphysical architecture of this festival with a new value system. All of us collectively are leaving with a new impression, especially with this eclipse. So powerful. We are all imparted, each and every one of us that have gathered here collectively in this space, in this time, to go back to the cities with a program that enters into the matrix of the cities. We need to be producing to restore.
FIGURE 1. “Altar States, Light of Day: Detail 1”

FIGURE 2. “Altar States, Light of Night: Detail 1”
FIGURE 3. “Altar States, Light of Day: Detail 2”

FIGURE 4. “Altar States, Light of Night: Detail 2”
FIGURE 5. “Altar States, Light of Day (Detail, Ch’aska Punku Altar): Detail 1”

FIGURE 6. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Ch’aska Punku Altar): Detail 1”
FIGURE 7. “Altar States, Light of Day (Detail, Ch’aska Punku Altar): Detail 2”

FIGURE 8. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Ch’aska Punku Altar): Detail 2”
FIGURE 9. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Ch’aska Punku Altar): Detail 3”

FIGURE 10. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Ch’aska Punku Altar): Detail 4”
FIGURE 11. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Ch’aska Punku Altar): Detail 5”

FIGURE 12. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Ch’aska Punku Altar): Detail 6”
FIGURE 13. “Altar States, Light of Day (Detail, Bird Eyes series): Detail 1”

FIGURE 14. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Bird Eyes series): Detail 1”
FIGURE 15. “Altar States, Light of Day (Detail, Bird Eyes series): Detail 2”

FIGURE 16. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Bird Eyes series): Detail 2”
FIGURE 17. “Altar States, Light of Day (Detail, Ancient Future Water Vessel I)”

FIGURE 18. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Ancient Future Water Vessel I)”
FIGURE 19. “Altar States, Light of Day (Detail, Ancient Future Water Vessel II)”

FIGURE 20. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Ancient Future Water Vessel II)”
FIGURE 21. “Altar States, Light of Day (Detail, Spirit In Forms)”
FIGURE 22. “Altar States, Light of Night (Detail, Spirit In Forms)”