
Exhibition Catalogs, Essays, and Related Materials

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Artist's Statement for Church of Totem

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CHURCH of TOTEM

Art is more than an expression. It is the sum total of everything that has come before and a dream of what is coming next. Artists spill their beliefs out of the cornucopia we call life and pour them into the lap of anyone who has a moment or two to stop and digest such creative industry.

After much time and contemplation, I bring you this body of work I call "Church of Totem" - a sanctuary created by me for creative folks to gather. In this show I use diverse media to approach the same question: "What would I want on the walls of *my* church?" I created a body of work that corresponds with my current beliefs. The "gospel" at the Church of Totem contains a bevy of symbols, icons, repetitive elements, and non-representational images that encourage multiple, even possibly contradictory, conclusions.

My hope is that you will take some time to view and contemplate each piece, and provide your own experience, as that is the main precept of the "Church." Beliefs are open to interpretation. There is always another metaphorical and metaphysical level, and theories are created and destroyed every instant. Don't get stuck, as change is the only constant! There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground (Rumi). The point is to get down and "kiss the bliss."

There is a good deal of mystery in art making for me. There is also mystery in experiencing it. I enjoy this and thrive from it. The question frequently arises, "Am I making it or is it making me?" I think the answer to that must be "YES!" Generally, I believe I learn from my work, and through learning give birth to something incredible.

Qualities I strive for:

Passion, ritual, direct contact, humor, boldness, reflexivity, tribalism, organicism, sexuality, musicality, super heavy funk, vitality, playfulness, oppositions, archaism, mysticism, wit, and wisdom.

I consider the collection to be a language of sorts, but it comes before words. It resides somewhere between traditional indigenous design, and graffiti art of today. It is a language that derives subconsciously from the natural world. I try to "get out of the way" and be a channel for something that is far deeper than words.

Even if you just get a good laugh, then it has been worthwhile. If I am the jester at whose expense you laugh, then I've done my job. Laugh with me, laugh at me; I don't care, just laugh, for from laughter comes wisdom. Go ahead, have an experience, kiss the ground.

Totem

Meetings at the Church of Totem will take place every Friday throughout the duration of the show from 7 p.m. until 9, or until participants decide it is time to go home. These “meetings” can include discussions on art and life, performances of amazing or not so amazing ideas, musical performance, theatrical performance, group hugs, demonstrations of creative impulse, joke telling, sharing of food, dancing, silliness, mathematical equation quotations, scat singing, biology experiments, scared silly attempts at almost anything, sitting in silence, trying to grow 8 ft. tall, seed sharing, canned goods barter, sewing, haircuts, poetry at the top of your lung capacity, group hugs, word invention games, marriages, piercing, clothing exchange, statistics of shoe sizes, admissions of amazing or not so amazing things you have done or want to do, grooming, gymnastics, book readings, sharing of secret life of computers, history lessons, mud-baths, yoga, dreaming, dreaming, singing, playing the organ, listening to grandma or grandpa, observing candle flame, popular mechanics stories, kissing, making of major or minor decisions, questions for me, answers for me, being an oxymoron, juggling, attempts at healing, sharing with friends and strangers, feedback, sleep, professor dragging (demo by Totem), play dress-up, pretending you are somewhere else, playing with dolls, exclamations of great import, deciding nothing, watch a movie, creative writing, whirling dervish demonstrations, ohm....., henna painting, sharing of recipes, sharing of something amazing you have made with your own hands, art exchange, drumming, discussions on different hats for different occasions, face painting, looking at the art, being art, group hug, group poetry, discussions about native flora and fauna, file sharing, realizations that you are the church, talks on dogs and cats, family picture sharing, archaeological digs, auto mechanics tips, hair color discussions, gardening tips, sharing of plans or plants, cultural observations, hopes for the future, mock burials, observations on the weather, specialty pastry tastings (if you bring them), burning man discussions, sharing of hot spring stories, humming, freestyle dentistry, more joke telling, therapeutic massage tips, trying something on for size, Kodak moments, demonstrations of yodeling and field hollering, esoteric realizations, celestial dreaming, wild writing, café rating, Tuvalu throat singing, banjo pickin’, discussion on wild berry gatherin’, how to be trained by a cat, readings of great import, book discussions, designing of a better world, bread recipe exchange, knitting basics, quilting, etc, etc, etc.