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Faculty Development Grant
Grantee Report

In the Caverns of Your Mind

Solo Exhibition

Self Actualization Gallery
Houston, Texas

January 9 – February 16, 2015

Opening Reception: Fri January 9th, 6-9pm

Performance w/ Meredith Corvette Carter & JD Emmanuel – Sat January 10th, 6pm

Project abstract:

In the Caverns of Your Mind is an exhibition of photographs, videos, and installation work mounted at Self Actualization gallery in Houston, Texas. The project derives from work primarily made during 2014, with some works dating to 2011.

The work explores the idea that new age/experimental spirituality and technical/commercial photography are both processes that seek personal transformation through the use of technology, such as highly specific body stimulation tools, cameras, computers, scanners, etc.

On a visual level the work was a mixture of photographs that were “re-made” or “re-staged” photographs originally contextualized as interior cassette or record sleeve images, psychic portraits, advertising imagery, Etsy/Ebay/Craigslist online sales photographs, as well as photographic instructional images. In addition, other photographs included portraits of figures from the original new age music movement and fantastical images of banal objects.

Videos in the exhibition included “The Square of Two is Irrational (for Ted Kaczynski) which has the artist James Benning proving the irrationality of the square of two atop a passing train at the Tehachapi Loop, a series animations of floating photographic equipment titled “An Assortment of

Waiting Rooms, spoken mantras and floating refrigerators in “Mantras for Future Self,” an hour long unfolding and arranging of artificial houseplants in “Recurring Spatial Relationship Skyscraper Ad Study,” and a new age variety show staged this past summer at the Hammer Museum called “Healing Light Comfort Zone TV.”

All of the work was mounted atop custom wallpaper that covered all of the non-video exhibiting walls. Videos were all shown as projections in individual rooms, and two arundo huts were constructed. One as a reading room, another as a viewing room.

A performance was staged on the second day of the opening with Meredith Corvette Carter and JD Emmanuel. I have an ongoing collaboration with Carter as cohost of the radio show on KCHUNG called Healing Light Comfort Zone and she appears in Healing Light Comfort Zone TV and in one of the exhibition’s photographs. Carter is a registered yoga instructor (RYT-200) as well as a textile designer. JD Emmanuel is a Houston-native and legendary ambient musician, who also appears in HLCZ TV. The performance was a three-part meditation. Carter led a series of simple breath and body exercises for participants that transitioned into a guided mediation I led regarding the dissolution of the body and the autonomous existence for the persona within an artificial network. This in turn led into a set of ambient music by Emmanuel.

This is the third exhibition at Self Actualization. The gallery is run by Jon Lindsey, Montie Large, and Tex Kerschen and is currently operating on the fourth floor of a largely derelict and vacant office building in the Midtown area of Houston.

Documentation images are still being edited, but will soon be hosted on the web at the following locations:
ianjamesinternetwebsite.com
selfactualizationtx.com

I would like to thank Otis and the Faculty Development Grant Committee for their gracious support of this project.