BURNING MAN AND THE ART PRESS

by Jason Thornburg

Media coverage of Burning Man has steadily intensified since the event began its annual incursion in the Black Rock Desert in 1990. It is reported every year in newspapers, magazines, and on television. The event’s media profile this year features increasing attention in the art press. In 2003, four major national and international publications have reported on both the art of Burning Man and the movement as a whole. The art press coverage testifies to a deepening impact of our community in the wider culture.

LEONARDO focuses on visual art that uses science and technology in innovative ways. The journal was founded in 1968 by kinetic artist and astronautural pioneer Frank Malina. Managing Editor Pan Grant Ryan was particularly fascinated by the ability of Burning Man artists to create technologically sophisticated works for presentation in a harsh desert environment. The magazine’s online gallery features a retrospective of Burning Man art from 1993 through 2000, including work by Vince Kolonic, David Buck and Jack Hayes, Page Chum, Zachary Coffin, and Dan Das Mann. An introductory essay by Burning Man art curator LadyDee emphasizes the collaborative, social dimension of the work. "There is a yet-crystallized art movement that may prove to be of some significance, and Burning Man is close to its center," LadyDee writes, quoting veteran Burning Man artist Lizzie Fox, "It’s a movement away from a dialogue between an individual artist and a sophisticated audience, and towards collaboration amongst a big, wild, free and diverse community."

London-based MODERN PAINTERS was one of the first art magazines to commission articles from writers outside the art world, such as novelists and poets. The spring 2003 issue features photographs of artworks at Burning Man 2002, including David Buck’s Temple of Or, and an interview by novelist and critic Geoff Dyer with Burning Man founder Larry Harvey. Dyer tells the story of a curator in England who, on the basis of a single newspaper photograph, informed him “with evident delight, that the art of Burning Man was rubbish.” Some time later, Michael Licht’s Full Moon exhibition of lunar photography was shown at the Hayward Gallery in London. The curator told Geoff how much he had been impressed by Michael’s exhibition. Dyer pointed out to the curator friend that Full Moon had, in fact, first been exhibited at Black Rock City in 1998. Geoff assumed that “the argument had been definitively settled,” but when he told the curator that Licht had exhibited his latest piece, culled from government photographs of nuclear bomb explosions, at Burning Man 2002, the curator said, “I bet Licht is the only artist worth his salt at Burning Man.”

Art is Alive outside of Black Rock City

by Jenny Slaybody

For one week each year, on an expense of open plains, the lines between art and everyday life are blurred. Burning Man participants interact with art in the same way that they interact with each other — by striking up conversations and developing intimate relationships with the myriad works that dot the sun-burnished expanse of the Black Rock Desert.

Cut in the less dusty world, art is often alienated from Burning Man’s sense of intimate and interactivity. In the “real world” art is subjected to the laws of commerce and the marketplace. In order to bridge the gap between experiences on the playa and the impersonality of the outside world, the Black Rock Arts Foundation was founded in May 2001. Its mission is to support the art of Burning Man’s ever-expanding community.

NO DOGS ALLOWED

photographer: Lisa Ann Eliason

How I became a regional contact:
photographer: Kevin Rose

Self-realization:
photographer: Tim Mauchard

Beyond Belief:
photographer: Bob Gourley

See page 4

Clean up:
photographer: Chris Rogers

See page 8

If it wasn’t made by your body, don’t put it in the Pasty.
photographer: Lisa Ann Eliason

continued on page 8

continued on page 2

see next page...
How I Became A Regional Contact

by Luke Bailey, St. Louis & Judy Franklin, Tennessee

Playfulness. Photographs by Shana Stone

When Burning Man asked me to write this article about my experiences as a successful startup Regional rep, I was both honored and horrified. I am a doer, not a writer. I love being a volunteer Regional coordinator, and I’ve been working like crazy to build a community here in St. Louis.

My friend Sarah got me interested when we started talking about Burning Man. She and a bunch of her friends were going, and they wanted me to join them. At the time, it seemed a little unrealistic to me that I would plan such an extensive cross-country trip. Suddenly, at one point, I realized that I was going, unrealistic or not, as I felt like I had just informed me that I was going.

I had not a clue what I was getting into, but I sure as hell was going to find out. I bought a ticket, made my plane flight arrangements, rented a truck, read the Survival Guide, and started shopping. Finally, I found myself standing there when the Wednesdays before Labor Day 1999, stone in the desert, in the middle of a dust storm, my ass still sore from being spanked by the Greaters, wearing safety goggles, with a flask full of whiskey in my pocket. I was trying to find a 15-foot radio tower where my friends would most certainly be staying. I found them without a hitch, and they even had a tent set up and waiting for me. For days, I was surrounded by and inundated with this amazing manifestation of creative power and human spirit. It was exactly what I needed.

I was looking to be a Black Rock City that I had discovered a new part of my life. My muse had returned to me.

A year later, during intense preparations for Burning Man 2000, I started searching the Rendezvous section of Burningman.com, trying to find a St. Louis contact. Abraham, the regional coordinator, informed me that I wouldn’t find one — no one had volunteered as the Regional rep here. The concept took about two days to seep through my thick skull. Then, it clicked: I was ready. I had been having an awful time finding creative, like-minded people in St. Louis. I figured if I couldn’t find the community I wanted, I would build it. I volunteered just before the 2000 Burn.

In St. Louis after the event, I started working to uncover the latent community around the city. I created an email list, called, found a bunch of local arts mailing lists, and started publicizing like crazy. I made a lot of contacts that gave me access to other local mailing lists, so I started republishing information about other organizations’ art events on the Burning Man list. This step turned out to be a great idea for community growth, as I gave my subscribers something to look forward to besides the stuff that I planned to do. If you want people to be interested in your events, you have to be interested in theirs.

On the Regional mailing list, you hear the advice “If you plan it, they will come.” Guess what? It is true. I decided to bring a project called “Sanctarchy” to St. Louis by doing a pub crawl, Kris Kringle style. I got about ten friends to commit to dress up in Santa gear, and to bring everyone they could. That arrangement turned out to be critical to the event’s success. We topped out at about 30 people that night, and we had a blast! We made such a ruckus that everyone wanted to know what it was all about. We passed out fliers and collected email addresses all along the way. The outfit created some buzz around the city in the name of Burning Man, but a local thing instead of “that party in California,” right?

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Dyers recounts this episode as background for asking Larry Harvey why Burning Man would elect such reflex hostility in the art establishment. “It’s because they earn their bread and better working for institutions whose purpose is to validate art,” Harvey replies. “People gather around institutions and accept the professional advice of people whose job it is to institutionally validate the art product. Burning Man, on the other hand, is devoted to immediately — we view art outside the frame that the contemporary art world puts around it. We tend to look at it as an instrument by which to create social relationships. It’s basically the connecting glue that holds this little experiment together and that’s a much larger agenda.

Art Parasites is an Atlanta-based arts publication, established in 1976, that widened its focus from reviews of local gallery openings to national coverage of wide-ranging topics. The magazine’s July/August issue includes the transcript of a speech given by Larry Harvey at the Woodruff Art Center in May, sponsored by Art Parasites and the Metropolitan Public Art Coalition. Larry’s talk explains Burning Man’s principle of radical expression, the gift economy, and the noncommercial, communal nature of art production at the event. “Burning Man revives art’s culture-bearing, connecting function,” he says. “It encourages art that is designed to be touched, handled, played with and moved through in a public arena, even as it encourages collaboration among artists. It blurs the distinction between audience and art, professional and amateur, spectator and participant.”

The art establishment has traditionally played an important role in determining an artist’s perceived value, by both critical and commercial measures. Art critics and curators act as gatekeepers to gallery or museum exhibitions. The art press helps shape the public perception of an individual artist or artistic movement, often moving avant-garde or alternative movements forward or mainstream recognition. In fact, such widening recognition can often mark theawning of an avant-garde movement’s iconoclastic power. But despite expanding awareness, the art of Burning Man seems unusually resistant to commodification because it is so site-specific, socially interactive and community-generated. As Geoff Dyer speculates, Burning Man’s growing profile in the art world might not mean that its art will find acceptance at MOMA. Instead, perhaps more mainstream artists will come to Burning Man to make a different kind of art and experience a different kind of relation to their audience.

Black Rock City is a long way from the nearest art gallery or museum, and the huge expense of the desert allows us to redefine what art means. The desert is a “sunning tabula rasa,” perfect blankness uninterrupted by birds, bugs or buhus,” Larry Harvey puts it in Art Parasites. “This context of no context makes anything leap to the eye, as if its identity shines out of it. In a primal way, it also makes people shine out of themselves — which, to us, means they become artists.”

Steven Raeto / experiments in flight.

La Contessa by Simon Cheffins, Matson, and crew. Photograph by Harring

Watching the X People. Photographs by Randy Phillips

The Burning Man Journal Summer 2003

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By Joan Filisko

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Associate Editor: John Hargrave

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Detroit Fire Dancer at Sandzuke Village. Photograph: Gary Porter

The Burning Pyrotechnics. Photograph by: George Pelt
Radical Self-Realization: Burning Man as Sacred Celebration
by Bob Rivinus

After I talk or teach about Burning Man, people often ask me, "Isn't it really just a big party?" I usually summarise something in response about all the other elements of Burning Man: the creativity, the community, the gift economy. I emphasize the enormous nature of short existences and the massive expenditures of effort involved in setting up and running theme camps. Sometimes, I’m rewarded only with a smirking, self-satisfied look, as though slyly confirming the interpretation that I’ve been conned, or that I am myself trying to con others. Many people already think that Burning Man really is just a big party, and nothing I can say will convince them otherwise.

Because of exchanges like these, I tend to downplay the frivolity and outrageousness of Burning Man when talking seriously about it. After careful reflection, I think this has been a mistake. I now feel that we can find out much about Burning Man’s role by examining its apparently frivolous qualities.

Anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers, and other scholars of contemporary culture are just beginning to explore the social role and function of parties — including many big parties. George McRyan has studied a plethora of ideologically focused parties in the 1960s that raised awareness of, and then actually helped to address, social issues at a grassroots level. Graham St. John, an Australian scholar, has studied "duds," outdoor parties located in the Australian outback. More than "just a party," a duds expose a communal rite, revealing environmental awareness, and seeks to focus attention on the rights of Indigenous Australians. Influential anthropologist Victor Turner reminds us that what counts as "antistructure" is a key element needed for any personal and social change.

The emerging consensus among a number of scholars, then, is that parties may be more than frivolous expenditures of bacchanalian energy. They can also be transformational gatherings that catalyse political or social change. Even more certainly, a number of scholars also find sacred qualities in these gatherings.

A sacred party? An anthropological eye, attuned to the cross-cultural currents of ritual and meaning, sees in parties, sacred spaces, festivals, celebrations, and parties a common, potent urge to transcend the current time-space, to connect with others, to expand and reveal the hidden Self. These ancient rites often incorporate loud music, heavy with drumming, fires (or their absence, flickering electronic equivalents), and the dervish dance, swaying movements of human bodies. What seems so out of place in a sacred experience, then, is the frivolity, the fun, the light-heartedness of laughter. Shouldn’t self-realization be a more somber and serious pursuit?

Clearly, critics see far too much fun going on at Burning Man to regard it as a serious spiritual experience. To name just a few proposed 2003 theme camps, consider: Tribal Pennis Councils, The Probability Nexus, The Tribe of the Chattering Monkeys, Sun Valley, The Church of L, and the Temple of the Aus. Cia. Something that includes such silliness actually holds the sacred within it? Within their carnivalesque parody, these themes can also merge symbols of the divine, sexuality, and the sacred. All these elements work together to try to dissolve what we are, and this dissolution makes room for what we might become.

The combination of humor and the sacred is fascinating because it draws us back to historic and prehistoric beliefs. Gods used to be laughing Trickers. The clowning Fool used to be the High Priest. The Temple’s mysteries were once presented as riddles, puzzles, and jokes. In contemporary non-Western society, religion has sterilized this ancient sense of sacred mirth, leaving an organized spirituality that is far less vital, alive, and able to connect with people’s imaginations than the older traditions. Religion — even much New Age religion — has muted the chuckling of the universe that the ancients once tuned into so clearly. The word comedy, after all, comes from the name of the Greek god Comos, who was once honored with elaborate rituals and processions. The clown god would probably feel right at home at Burning Man.

Contemporary Western society places a high premium on rational behavior. Our ordinary "real world" lives maybe with the effects of clocks, calendars, charts, spreadsheets, appraisals, PDAs. Our commercially driven society is based on calculations of individual self-interest, efficiency, and productivity. Utterly opposed to all of these values is the illegal excess of the sacred party. Celebrations, festivities, holidays, and holy days are the sole sacred times marked out for this logical inversion of the dominant production laws. By this means, we open up a space within ourselves that stands outside of normal time.

This year, as we ponder Burning Man’s inestimable theme camp, Beyond Belief, why don’t we also ponder the way we combine the sacred and the secular when we are experiencing Black Rock City? We express ourselves radi ally there. We rely radically on ourselves. But we also stretch our definitions of self, our ways of being, through the use of humor, play and unconditioned outcomes. By breaking chains of convention, we enter Moments of possibility. We engage in Radical Self-Realization. When we lose ourselves in the moment, change has a chance to manifest in the evanescent wake of our experience.

These are the issues I’ve been thinking about lately. Burning Man’s sacred and transformational principles are delicate matters, no doubt. Yet it is not necessary for us to buy into the presumption that sacred gatherings and parties are opposed to one another — one representing soberness, Order, the other all-out Chaos. The two are one, and the one is many: Ancient mysteries live on in continually renewed vessels.

So the next time someone asks me if Burning Man isn’t really just a big party, I know exactly what I’m going to do. I’m going to think about the sacred celebration. I won’t say anything as they sink in at all. I’ll channel my personal god, Comus, and just laugh.

Bob Rivinus is an anthropologist and assistant professor at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management. He has been attending and writing about Burning Man since 1999.

At the asparagus flagstone station. Photograph by Richard Muench

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Auditorium about the social, civic, and economic contents of art in Black Rock City. In conjunction with the lecture, the Burning Man-inspired interactive art event RIFE was created. Organized by members of the Burning Man community, including Zach Cuffin, Rock Smothers, 2000) and Charles Smith (PEARL, 2000-2001; INFINITY, 2000), RIFE became a reflection of both the Burning Man spirit and the distinctive character of the Atlanta arts community. In a chain reaction of events began by the effort of creating RIFE, the arts collective RIFE Atlanta was born.

Partially funded by grants from the Metropolitan Public Art Coalition, RIFE Atlanta (http://www.onepople.com/rife) continues to grow as a separate but allied support network for not-for-profit interactive arts in the Atlanta community.

The organic development of RIFE Atlanta from within the Burning Man community creates a relationship of reciprocity between regional artists, the Back Rock Arts Foundation, and a larger segment of the public. These developments, along with the support of individuals, further expands both creative and financial resources that can be redistributed back into the community to help keep interactive art alive off the plaza. "Ideally we want it to make it possible for people who don’t attend Burning Man to experience our culture," says Harvis.

Contrary to common belief, Harvis stresses, the Black Rock Arts Foundation is not the funding body for Burning Man art grants. Indeed, the Back Rock Arts grants are distributed to artists whose work creates participation and social communion in the greater world beyond the genes of Black Rock City. By this time next year, the Black Rock Arts Foundation hopes to expand its membership. Why wouldn anyone want to become a member? "Simple," says Harvis, "If Burning Man has changed your life, why not help it change the world?"

To see a list of this year’s grant recipients or to become a contributing member of the Back Rock Arts Foundation, visit the foundation’s website at http://www.blackrockarts.org.

Home sweet home. Photograph by Kate Kirschen.

Loose Leaf by Jenny Gaines and Paul Czerwinski. Photograph by Tom Linning.

In and her Sea shell suit. Photograph by Dae Capone.

Love and Seashores by Susan Sobczak. Photograph by Emily Evans.

Soup’s On! Spill Ringo models at the Fashion Show. Photographer: Dae Capone.
2003 ART THEME:

"What is any religion? A little ritual, a little superstitious, and some magic. It's not a strictly spirirtual affair; it has psychological rules in it. You might not want it to be a religion based on your own experience but that's like wanting to clean up your dreams." — GARY FRIEDMAN

Beyond belief, beyond the dogmains, creeds, and metaphysical ideas of religion, there is immediate experience. It is from this primal world that living faith arises. The intention of Beyond Belief is to explore this mystery. In 2003, we will invite participants to create interactive sites, ritualistic spaces, elaborate images, shrines, icons, temples, and visions. Our themes will occupy that amorphous territory that lies between reverence and ridicule, faith and belief, the absurd and the stunningly sublime. The human urge to make marks, objects, actions, and personalities sacred is potent. It can be on or it inhabits anyone or anything. This year our art theme will release that spirit in the Black Rock Desert.

A SEARCH FOR THE SACRED

"There is no formal difference between play and ritual, as the camouflaged speaf cannot be formally distinguished from the playground. The arena, the cardboard box, the magic circle, the altar in town squares and public parks, i.e., taboos, rituals, holidays, holidays, within which special rules attach. All are temporary worlds within the ubiquitous world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart."

Sacred things appear to come from some profoundly other place that is beyond the bounds of space and time. It is as if a window is thrown open upon another world that is more real than our own. The ancient, unchanging nature of all sacred things releases powerful emotions: joy, awe, wonder, dread, and, in its most transcendent form, pure exaltation. The sacred speaks to us of vastness and union with a power larger than our conscious selves. The sacred gives us access, it is, to greater being. Yet whether sacred things are really real is always open to examination. Beyond Belief asks two related questions: How does the sacred exist, and where might it be found?

This year’s theme is an attempt to reinscribe the quest of faith as it is the creation of religion. Our purpose is to discern assertions of belief and concentrate instead on the experience of play. Beliefs contain, define, and limit meaning. They reduce truth to a rational community. But play can free us to envisage truths of which we have no proof or warrant. Such play breaks down distinctions that divide belief from belief, and allows the player freedom to realize beyond the scope of reasoning thought. Our theme invites you to attend to what is deep within you and unite with a world we can’t possess.

SACRED AND PROFANE

"Mythical stories, when fully developed, usually are, and have the right to be, absolutely outlandish. Yet even the individuals who come, [is] an undecipherable enigma from which they should make it if only for those who stand inside of them to accept their revelation authentically..." — WILLIAM JAMES

This year we’ll take the curving streets that form the arc of Black Rock City and construct our own. Curving ritual streets, which weave the sacred into our actions, will be labeled according to the points displayed on the face of a clock, starting with 10:00 and ending at 2:00. In addition, these same streets will be labeled with sections that can be used to qualify belief. Our city plan will thus become an ever-growing tapestry of meaning. The intersections of this grid system will yield 172 combinations of sacred space.

When asked what you are in 2003, you may state that you stand firmly on Authority somewhere between Real and Imagined.

This naming system will create a kaleidoscopic filled with ever-changing points of view and contradictions. Central to this system is the street forming the axis of our city. This street will be designated as a path of ideas, self-contradictory and opposed to common sense, which might express the sacred.

TEMPLES ON A PLAIN

"We recognize the [sacred] as an indispensable aspect of all performances — and all of those beliefs religions has its strangest claim to being in sharp [all] the believer, by appropriate practices, consecrates his dependence and his child-like faith and scale, by appropriate affirmations, to secure the privilege of being lifted up in the very beams of the divine. And justifies us of its power, a sense of its power, and yet a disinterestedness confirmed, and the like the highest of a sense of its power, by the bashful recognition of all its pain in shared faith's in one all embracing "I am.""

Throughout the course of history humans have sought out sacredness in many different ways and places. We have made of it an object of both prayer and contemplation. We have created it in our heads and hidden it deep underground. We have embodied it in ritual and built it in temples. At this year’s Burning Man, we will erect a temple at the geographic center of our city. We will consider it to make an axis mundi — that type of cosmic center that was anciently believed to be the origin of all existence. Such sacred spaces were regarded as an ordering of the underlying order of the universe.

CONCENTRIC STREETS:
(ordered alphabetically)

The Espanade
Authority
Crest
Eclipse
Faith
Gossip
Reality
Theory
Vein

RADIAL STREETS:

10:00 — Sacred
9:30 — The Vein
9:00 — Real
8:30 — Eclipse
8:00 — Gossip
7:30 — Reality
7:00 — Authority
6:30 — Crest
6:00 — Faith
5:30 — Theory
5:00 — Vein
4:30 — Espanade
4:00 — Reality
3:30 — Authority
3:00 — Crest
2:30 — Vein
2:00 — Sacred

Street Nomenclature: Courtesy of Manatees

The Turning Hour
photographer: Keith Royal

Great Temple, graphic by Rod Garrett, design by Sandy Henry and Rod Garrett
Four broad ceremonial avenues will stretch outward from this cosmological center toward the four horizons. We urge you to unite with others in procession on these promenades. Solemn or silent, ecstatic or eerie, penitential or joyous—in any mood or manner that expresses sacredness—these interactive rites will culminate within the circle that surrounds our pyramid temple. If you plan a procession or a ritual performance that features fire, involves the use of moving vehicles, or in any way interacts with the structure of the pyramid, please contact processions@burningman.com.

A hollowed boundary of naked sand will frame the pyramid, and sixteen niches will surround its base. Any participant may occupy a niche and be transformed into a living icon. A Guardian will guide you through the temple to your niche. Persons who witness you adorned to be initiated into a tribe by your special presence in this space. In order to fulfill this role, you must accept a leading or assisting role (body paint and costuming are highly recommended).

Perforated gods will also welcome in the temple niches. These icons must be larger than a broach, but may not exceed the stature of a human being. All submissions will be placed in advance of the event. If you wish to have your own sacred god display in the temple niche, please contact art@burningman.com.

If you would like to become a Temple Guardian and aid in creating and maintaining the sand garden that borders the temple, help orient the living icons, or help us to preserve the sanctity and safety of this place, contact TempleGuardians@burningman.com.

Deep inside the pyramid, inner sanctum will house altars. These altars will be dedicated to the passage of gifts. For our special purpose, we will imagine such gifts to be barriers of being. Whatever you may choose to place upon an altar should invoke a sense of wonder or delight in those who witness it and may express any of the vast variety of feelings we associate with sacrificial acts. These sacrificial objects may not exceed a handbreadth in any dimension or contain toxic substances. Sanctions, shrines, and offerings will be consumed by fire when the Man is burned.

This year the figure of the Burning Man will be accessible to everyone. You can wear a giant wicker skin, its foot-high treads forcing you to take giant steps. Slowly you will labor toward the chamber on the temple's uppermost tier. The center of this chamber will be marked by a pool of water, which, perfectly aligned upon the axis with the spine of Burning Man, will help you meditate upon the universe and all those who inhabit it. Immediately below this view of our city, your eyes will come to rest upon the outline of a labyrinth.

Labyrinths are of extremely ancient origin, and no one can reasonably decipher what they may be intended to represent. One day you may ask a question as you enter one, you will feel an unwillingness to leave it—this is only one of many possible interpretations. Unlike the puzzle of a maze's layout, it is not about becoming lost, nor does it tempt one with what's hidden out of view. It is to understand the inner form and structure of the mind. Find yourself upon a path, forever turning inward, forever turning outward. Only by paying the riddle of the mystery at its core. Finally, you discover that your purpose is a return from the path itself. If you plan a large procession or performance that incorporates the labyrinth, please contact processions@burningman.com.

Beyond the periphery of the temple complex are three colossal towers that are, in turn, surrounded by smaller towers of a second temple near the far horizon. The Temple of Honor will be consecrated to the passage of spirits. You are invited to bring relics to this shrine. Messages may be inscribed on paper to be inserted into the lives of loved ones you have lost. On the seventh night after the Man has burned.

The Temple of Honor will mark the outermost edge of the Temple Plane. People who pass beyond it will escape into a void where all things that we know, regard, believe, or seem to hold transcurrence lies. This is the landscape of epiphany. All that resides within it is called the Whole Other.

The Realm of the Whole Other

Imagine, then, by miracle, with me, labyrinthine spills, on whatAnalysis, you must be what could not possibly be there, and learn a style from despair—WILLIAM EMERSON

Odd things don't fit. Like the thirteenth egg in a dozen, they violate a category that gives order to our whole world. Strange things are considered odd, but also challenge explanation. A square egg, for example, would be strange. Weird things are not only odd and lack a ready explanation; in addition, they repel all possible attempts at explanation. They contradict a framework that governs what we think is so ordinary. An egg that is in a shroud or a crowd to you is no longer about your childhood, but about the world. At each stage within this series of extravagances, the whole context of our world is stretched and doubled. We extend this process of doubling, of going beyond the odd, the strange, and the weird—we cross a final boundary line. We arrive at the realm of the Whole Other.

The universe in this whole other world is not defined by light but that falls upon them. Instead, they radiate a kind of inner light that shines through them. They have the quality of what is called the luminous —a unique, luminous potency, an eerie kind of presence that is said to mark the advent of a sacred thing. Such visions are embodiments of unconditional reality, and through our act of witness, it is said, they can transfigure what we are.

Beginning with the dawn of human consciousness, mystics have sought out this realm of supercharged experience. They have retreated into caves, removed themselves to mountaintops, and disappeared into the solitude of desert space. They have relentlessly employed themselves of our world, they have fasted, prayed, and kept vigil—all in pursuit of that which cannot be compared to any other thing. What these pilgrims have encountered on their outward journeys into nothspace is matter for conjectures. The only proper answer of the faithful to the skeptic is that one must be there if one hopes to understand.

In the year 2002, we will populate this world beyond our world with artworks that evoke such visions. Other thematic related artworks will live within the processionary ways that converge on the Great Temple. If you plan to create a work of art that in some way expresses the spirit of Beyond Belief, please contact art@burningman.com.

As in an elaborate world, artworks unrelated to our theme are also welcome at Burning Man. We've site specific art, installments within open space before our city. If you wish to install such a work, please contact installations@burningman.com.
AIRPORT For landing procedures check out:
http://b rimingman.com/ or the plane's airport or contact the Airport Manager,
a@b rimingman.com or (408) 397-9795.

COMMERCE No vending of products or food is permitted at Buming Man, except sales of tee at Campground and coffee at the Center Camp Café. This event is an experiment in community dedicated to radical self-expression and radical self-research. Please bring all you need to survive.

DAY PASSES There are no Day Passes to Buming Man. All artists must pre-pay at the gate, and No artists will be sold at the gate unless you have an out of state driver's license. You may also leave and return in your own vehicle, but you will pay a fee of $20.

DEPARTMENT OF MUTANT VEHICLES The only motor vehicles allowed to drive at the event aside from service vehicles are art cars, which are an important symbol of the counterculture. Art cars must be inspected and licensed prior to the event. All art cars must display their DMV placard. For information on what qualifies as an art car and to register your own vehicle, contact dmv@b rimingman.com.

MEDIA We require all professional print, photographic, video, and film media personnel to register in advance if they want to cover the event. Every member of the media must purchase a pass, and all are expected to comport themselves as participants in the community. The deadline to register projects with commercial intent was July 1, 2003. The number of commercial crews allowed to film during the event is limited. Professional media must check in at Media Mocca in Center Camp upon arrival. Questions about press registration can be sent to press@b rimingman.com or left on our hot line. Visit the Press Here section of the website for extensive information.

VIDEOS/NARRATION Any participant bearing a motion film or video camera must sign a Personal Use Agreement. Forms will be available at the Creator station, Plays Info, and Ranger Outposts in the Civic Plaza. You will receive a tag that you must affix prominently to your camera. Your intent is to be the guardian and image of every participant, including the Man, from commercial exploitation, to keep that Buming Man functioning. We have constant need of a variety of software design, development, and management skills, including Python, Zope, PHP, Perl, Relational Database design, PostgresQL, MySQL, projectmanagement, systems administration, and more. Please contact tech@volunteer@b rimingman.com to get involved.

EXODUS We are looking for traffic experts and fools interested in making as much fun in Kinig as we are. Sign up your big brain at: exodus@b rimingman.com.

FIRE CLEARANCE If you are a fire performer please contact fireclearances@b rimingman.com.

GATE Open, the initial portal to Black Rock City. Email gate@b rimingman.com.

GREETERS We greet people as they arrive. Email greeters@b rimingman.com.

LAMPLIGHTERS Come and join us as we light the streets of Black Rock City each night. Email lamplighters@b rimingman.com.

LEGAL If you are a lawyer or legal expert, we can use your help. Email your area of interest to legal@volunteer@b rimingman.com.

MEDIA MECCA If you have PR or media experience, please send an email to our team at media@volunteer@b rimingman.com.

OFFICE SQUAD SAN FRANCISCO We need all kinds of help, from stuffing envelopes and photoshopping to database entry. Contact office@volunteer@b rimingman.com.

PLAYA INFO We are the primary resource for on-playa information. Contact us at playainfo@b rimingman.com.

RANGERS The Black Rock Ranger create the core infrastructure for safety and ensure the collective survival of the community. Email ranger@b rimingman.com.

RECYCLING We recycle only aluminum, no glass, no plastics, no bottle caps. Contact recycle@b rimingman.com.

Art Installations If you are creating an art installation and would like to be on the map, fill out the installation questionnaire (http://www2.brimingman.com/resources/art.html). If you are interested in working on themes in the "Beyond the Beisl" area please contact them@b rimingman.com.

Volunteer! We need volunteer teams and volunteer team members. There is no volunteer we don't need, want, and love. Buming Man is truly a participan
cient-created event. Be a volunteer and know that you made Buming Man 2003 happen. If you would like to volunteer at the event, please call Plays Info in Center Camp.

If you have ANY questions about volunteering, 
please contact volunteer@b rimingman.com.

If you are interested in helping us, but have no Internet access, you're welcome to call our hotline (415 TO FLAME) and leave a message in the general mailbox and our volunteer coordinator will call you back. You can also write to Buming Man, Attention: Volunteer Coordinator, PO BOX 884688, San Francisco, CA 94188-4688. Below is a list of the various volunteer teams and contact information for each.

To get involved, fill out the volunteer request
form (http://www2.brimingman.com/people/) and be sure to specify which team you would like to volunteer in the third section "Volunteer Team Interests." You may be contacted by our volunteer coordinators, and you will be added to our volunteer email announcement list.

ARTERY Join the Art Team and help plan art installations, document the art, assist artists, and host the Artery. Contact installations@b rimingman.com.

BLACK ROCK GAZETTE The BRC team publishes the City's official newspaper. Contact bragheetz@b rimingman.com.

BOX OFFICE The Black Rock City Box Office sells tickets and holds and distributes will calls tickets. Contact thompson@b rimingman.com.

BUS SERVICE If you would like to help staff the Bus Depot in Center Camp and assist Buming Man attendees in and out of BRC, email busdept@b rimingman.com.

CAMPARTICA Help us build our camp and sell ice. Email ice@volunteer@b rimingman.com.

CAMPFIRE CAMP CAFE Help build the Cafe, make fires, sell drinks, make make tea and other miscellaneous systems. Email cafe@b rimingman.com. If you feel your music or performance is appropriate to the cafe and want to perform, please email cafe-sound@b rimingman.com.

CLEAN UP If you want to help secure the playa after the event please email cleanup@b rimingman.com.

COMMUNICATIONS GRAPHIC DESIGNERS help create our newsletter once a week in your high end Macs. We need event flyers, stickers, and other miscellaneous para
ellels. Indicate your skills on the questionnaire.

PHOTO TEAM The Buming Man Image Team is looking for an evolved Photoshop and Image Editing gurus. If you want to get involved with this sort of project, indicate your skills on the volunteer questionnaire — we would love your help.

WEB TEAM Web designers, writers, graphic designers, information architects, project managers, HTML jockeys, web programmers, coders, photographers, and Photoshop experts are needed to help keep our newly redesigned site looking fresh. Email tech@volunteer@b rimingman.com.

WRITERS We are always looking for writers with strong skills to help create this newsletter, our website, online journals, and other publications. Please email writer@b rimingman.com or fill out a volunteer questionnaire. Be prepared to show us samples of your work.

DPW — BUILD BLACK ROCK CITY The Department of Public Works needs painters, carpenters, mechanics, electricians, riggers, designers, truck drivers, etc. Hard-working bodies of all types are needed at least a month before the volunteer event. Email dpw@volunteer@b rimingman.com.

EARTH GUARDIANS We educate participants about keeping the playa clean. Contact earthguardians@b rimingman.com.

EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT (ESD) We provide emergency first response resources (Fire, EMS, Dispatch, Mental Health). Please email 911@b rimingman.com.

ENGINEERING The Engineering Team develops, manages, and maintains the technical infrastruc
tures of Buming Man. We have constant need of a variety of software design, development, and management skills, including Python, Zope, PHP, Perl, Relational Database design, PostgresQL, MySQL, project management, systems administration, and more. Please contact tech@volunteer@b rimingman.com to get involved.

2003 Buming Man Journal—Summer-Fall 2003
Preserving Community By Preventing Theft
by Tom Price & Roy Ban

For many of us, creating and participating in a community built around personal responsibility, gift-based interaction, and openly sharing of ourselves is more important than anything else that happens on the playa. Many leave Black Rock City profoundly changed in their perceptions about how community and society can function, going back to spread small seeds of open-mindedness back home. Nothing shatters these feelings like theft, and sadly the playa isn’t exempt. With that in mind, read on.

What Is Theft?
In a city built on a gift economy, it can start innocently enough: someone helping themselves to an open pack of cigarettes, snagging a beer out of a camp’s communal ice chest without asking (or being offended), or even hopping a ride on an art car without thanking the maker who built it. But theft is more than just someone “borrowing” an unattended bicycle at a port-o-potty, conning someone into the event, or lifting a $2000 generator while the owner is watching the Man burn. It’s also taking your image, your energy, your efforts and your creativity without your consent. It occurs any time there is an unwilling or uninformed exchange of goods. It is a breakdown in our shared social contract. The good news is it can be largely prevented.

Stopping It Before It Starts
Though some thefts are calculated and premeditated, most occur on the spur of the moment, when someone walks past an unattended camp or public area and sees something worth taking, and then greed and adrenaline combine. There are many ways to make sure that your unmet needs rise to the surface and hang — there goes your El Wine Pogo Stick.

To stop theft from happening, here are a few commonsense security issues:
1. Know your neighbors. Thieves prey on people not knowing each other. March right over to that truck that just pulled in and share your plate of seven-layer bean dip and packets of Emergen-C to say hello. See someone near your camp you haven’t met? Introduce yourself. Most people will appreciate it, and thieves will be disheartened from going anywhere they’re recognized.
2. Organize a Neighborhood Watch in your Little Patch of IBC. It can be as organic or loose or tight as you like — the important thing is giving your neighbors the gift of watching out for each other. Doing so encourages interaction, endearments familiarity and establishes trust.
3. Keep a Safe and Secure Camp. The open nature of most living in Black Rock City is custom made for opportunity thieves. Shave them from themselves: when you leave camp, even for a few minutes, place valuable items out of sight.
4. Don’t bring things you can’t live without. Don’t bring over your $3000 uninsured, grip-shifted, tricked-out mountain bike to the playa to ride back and forth to the Man. The Van is there, you’re making a mistake. If you bring it without a lock, you need to have your head examined.
5. If you take something, take it back. Sometimes the moment gets the best of us. Maybe you borrowed a bike, a tarp, or a required munmus without asking. If so, take it back, apologize, and do something to make it up for it — nothing says “I’m truly sorry” like washing someone’s crusty plays seat, hint hint.

The Cost of Art Theft
Probably nothing tears at the soul of the city stories about art theft. Art theft has immediate consequences. It discourages artists from putting forward their best efforts. It might even prevent them from returning to the event. A case in point: people wandering the playa at night in 1997 sometimes stumbled across sound installations made from hundreds of small plates, each holding two speakers. Because it operated only at night and completely devoid of lights, just discovering the installation was a gift, and lying amidst the soft rustle of noise in the darkness was for many their fondest memory of that year. Sadly, most will never experience that art: several speakers were stolen, and the artist, quite understandably, has refused to bring it back. Just last year, some extremely selfish people stole some of the pieces from the Lily Pond installation, a thoughtless act that both deprived everyone else of another’s effort and vision.

Art theft is wrong. Art theft destroys the community. Art theft will ruin hot artistic death down on you are asking a pug, if you really can’t live without a souvenir, find the artist — many might be willing to work something out.

Meanwhile, take responsibility for protecting art. If you see someone acting inappropriately — pulling a bulb from ZPB, pulling decorations off a better bare — ACT! Call them the dock account. And don’t put up with anyone saying, “it’s going to burn anyway, does what it makes.” Only the artist decides when and if to burn their work, not the Van Inoculator.

A Thief in Your Midst
Say that in spite of all your neighborhood watch group’s best effort, someone slipped in and stole something — or tried to, because you caught ‘em red handed, now what? You have a couple options. Remember: Black Rock City is about radical self-expression AND responsibility. Accept responsibility for your interactions, and if you feel comfortable doing so, deal it within the confines of your personal community. If you work to everyone’s satisfactions, without having to bring in the fed, you’re good. On the other hand, if you don’t feel you can or want to deal with this, call on the Black Rock Rangers with outposts located at 5:00, 9:00, and Center Camp, open 24/7. They will work with you to create a solution.

Common Sense, Uncommon Interaction
Remember that the worst times for theft are during the big burns, which makes sense in two ways: most everyone has left their camp, and in the frenzied rush to get-grasped and fueled up for the big night out, you may not take time to put everything away. Do. Five minutes locking up your stuff now equals one hour you don’t have to spend down at Playa Info waiting in line, only to be told that no one has returned it. 151 Powerhook you left on your coffee table.

Again, remember that most theft takes place on impulse, involves strangers, so in fact the fewer people who are strangers the less theft. Most people want to do good, people on the playa especially so, but not everyone can easily express themselves or meet strangers. Stretch yourself — go out of your way to talk to that new neighbor. Hey, you never know what may come of it. As an anonymous note left hanging in a dome once said “Love doesn’t always call. Sometimes it whispers — keep listening.”

www.burningman.com

Flag Man, landing area for the Sky People. Garret Kinno.

The Lily Pond by Jeremy Lutes. Matthew Born.

Detail of a dragonfly from the Lily Pond. Garret Kinno.


Regional Contacts
If you would like to be a regional contact in an area not yet covered, have been to Burning Man at least once, and are interested in connecting people, please email: regional@burningman.com and indicate your interest. Please visit our website to see if a Burning Man regional is in your area.

Flag Man, landing area for the Sky People. Garret Kinno.

The Who created by Tam Kennedy, Michael "Flash" Hopkins, Dave Alberry and team. Matthew Born.

Eagles by Alko Pettis. Matthew Born.
Coyote Nose
by Tony Prosc

A dead-level, freshly washed chalk board. A blank slate Playa: That's all that's out there now. But to us, it's the largest canvas in the world, and the Magic Disappearing City is poised for its annual renewal. We're once again ready to stitch the beautiful arcs of a grand city as sculpture into its hide— one with a population of about thirty thousand, or so. Miraculously, a trolley cruising the City site at this time would have nary a class "bustin' out 2002. All his time would find would be an occasional black pebble, or maybe a piece of brush that blew in. Even if you stood right next to the Man burned, it would be a very hard stretch for him to visualize an enormous art city that sparkles brighter than Reno.

Black Rock City '02 is gone!

For many burners, Black Rock City '02 ended when the Man burned. For many others, like myself, it ended when the playa was cleared in the fall. But actually, last year's city doesn't truly give up the ghost until the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) spring inspection, when the passing grade for clean-up is determined by the inability to find a trace of our fair city. Our permit to operate this year's city depends on our passing this test. Well this year, we got the big whopping gold star! We passed by the best margins yet. We're actually getting concerned that we might be setting the bar a little too high. (O Art)

But the city didn't just get up and walk away, and it's funny how this cyclical season-called Burning Man finds its start and finish in the business of picking up litter and debris. The only way that our Shagri-La is able to vaporize is by the personal and concerted efforts of absolutely every one of its citizens. After most people leave, the remaining structures and debris (sculls) are removed by those who remain under the direction of the DPO. There's no way that this Coyote can describe the magnitude of the effort. Just know that it never ends.

I was having a powwow with Larry Harvey and the Jack Rabbit concerning the categories of MOOP (Matter Out Of Place, or litter). Here are a few:

1. HAND MOOP: The most abundant and frustrating are the things that simply leave the hand and hit the ground unnoticed: cigarette butts, bottle caps, candy wrappers, etc. This category is the most frustrating because it's the easiest to avoid.

2. SETUP AND TEAR DOWN MOOP: Construction stuff like wood chips, zip ties, curly-Q drill bit shavings, PVC, nails and screw—oh, and did I say NAILS AND SCREWS? This is a frustrating type of MOOP because it can be avoided with a little fore-thought and a simple tarp.

3. ACCIDENT MOOP: The necklace that breaks during the DPW parade. The bottle that fell off the deck of some crazy broken boat at sunrise, etc.

4. ART MOOP: Installations drop leaves, twigs, grass, bits of metal, welding ring, sequins, beads, mirror ball glass—a very long list.

5. BLOW AWAY SCUMSY MOOP: Ash, plastic bags, an entire cantaloupe, wood chips, etc. This stuff can end up floating on the winter lake that forms on the playa, and gets deposited in the city of the north fence line. Here it creates a "shove line" that is most difficult to remove.

Last year we slipped some (mostly due to the dust storms). We need to keep trumpeting out the usual messages along with some new ones. We must always remember and practice the basics: Never let it leave your mind, never let it hit the ground. Leave no trace. And this year's new mantra: CLEAN AS YOU GO! That way, the annual after-burn dust storm will just cover up an already clean camp. Hey, men, it could happen!

We must be mindful of the Porta Potty practice.

Too many crazy things are ending up in them. Mike Enos aka "First Burgle", owner of our portapotty vendor (Johnny on the Spot), said that one night his crew had to dig a pair of blue jeans from a toilet! Coyote doesn't know the story on this one, and doesn't want to know! Objects such as this slow down the pumping process, cost our vendor money, and inconvenience everyone.

To keep the vendor happy and willing to contract with us, we must trumpet this message: If it wasn't in your body, don't put it in the pot! Anything left in a toilet MUST pass through your body before it hits the tank. As DPW's fearless leader Wil Roger puts it, if you've passed a pair of Nikes through yourself first, you can leave them in there! Any takers?

So let's go out to the Playa, stick the sculpture that is our city into the clay, live it for a week, burn stuff and catch the ashes, zip it all out of there, then relax our shoulders into the ebbing hammock of a job well done. Creating Black Rock City and making it disappear are two sides of one coin. The Coyote knows. CLEAN AS YOU GO!

Tony Prosc is the Site Manager for the Department of Public Works. He hopes the city and is in charge of cleaning it up.

Something Beyond by Mark Orians.

photographer: Ben Delfert

The Grate Light by David Biggs
photographer: Diza Schramm

The Foods' Ark by NADA of Amsterdam.
photographer: UKA.

Anna Volumens by Aaron Mussallem and crew.
photographer: Olaf Alger

The Blue Abyss.
photographer: Scott Owens

Beyond Belief August 25 - September 1 2003

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