

Lucas Handwerker

You & I: Live Artist's Statement

Before we begin, check to make sure you aren't bracing, unclench your jaw, drop your shoulders, take a deep breath. Much better.

My parents met and married in an esoteric cult in the 1970's. They had to take a vow of poverty and celibacy. After 14 years together in the cult my mother decided she wanted children, so they left the cult with nothing, and had two children. My parents, being devoted to healing and teaching, named me Lucas from the latin word for light. My last name is Handwerker, meaning 'builder' in German. My name literally means light builder.

I've realized recently that all of my interests in magic, mentalism, hypnotherapy, and intuitive readings connect back to indigenous healers and shamans. In every village around the world, there was typically a mystic, medicine person, witch doctor, shaman, or light builder.

As I studied global anthropology I discovered that all over the world, mystics would essentially use different iterations of the same practices. They would all use the same four elements:

The Sacred Trap–Storytelling–Altered States–Divinatory Readings

Shamans would first begin with a sacred trap which is legerdemain or conjuring to elicit an open state of wonder and to show that the spirit has control over the physical world. This would set the stage for healing to happen. Light builders would then do a divinatory reading, sometimes with bones, sometimes with fire, sometimes just by looking at someone. These divinations would give prescriptive advice on any issue plaguing the sitter. Light builders would then elicit altered states, and finally tell fable-like stories. This was also done communally as a ritual.

Inspired by indigenous healers and shamans *You & I* aims to modernize the mystical communal experience by incorporating the sacred trap, the intuitive divinatory reading, altered states, and storytelling.

It was important to me to create this experience in a culturally aligned way. This kind of communal mystical healing experience is extremely important to human well being, but is largely missing in our public spaces and in our Western culture. *You & I* will modernize and Westernize the mystical healing experience by using Western practices in a modern format.

You & I will fuse Western divination practices (Tarot/numerology/pyromancy), Western altered states (hypnotherapy/trance), Western conjuring (magic/mentalism), in a Western setting (live performance theater) to create the modern mystical healing experience. Fears will dissolve, questions will be answered, wonder will consume, community will be felt.

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