

Jonathan Ames

Transcript of visual culture jam performance

[He is sitting on table in front of his image, chanting text to Indian music.]

I didn't try to become a hipster but the first time I went to Home Depot and bought a can of black Krylon(sp?). Walked along the train tracks with my best friend talking about religion class and spray painted a bridge illegally it made my heart sing.

The bums as holy as the seraphim. The mad man is as holy as, you, my soul are holy. The typewriter is holy. The poem is holy. The voice is holy. The ... is holy. The ecstasy is holy.

My appearance may be silly, off putting, unnecessary, flamboyant, ridiculous, insane and unintelligent to many but the first time I saw the joint passed around the backroom at the party, I didn't run away. Holy Peter, Holy Alan, Holy Soloman, Holy Lucy, Holy Carowak, Holy Hung, Holy Burrows, Holy Cassidy, Holy the unknown, buggard and suffering beggars, Holy the hideous human angels.

Despite counter-cultural tendencies, I have pursued an academic career alongside the smartest people I have ever met in my life and have exceled at it.

Holy my mother in the insane asylum, Holy the cocks of the grandfathers of Kansas, Holy the groaning saxophone, Holy the ... apocalypse. Holy the jazz bands, marijuana, hipsters, peace, peyote, pipes, and drums.

Despite all of this, I have a network of people who would instantly vouch for my professionalism and expertise in many fields, most notably new media, ceramics, and early childhood education.

Holy the solitudes of sky scrapers and pavements. Holy the cafeterias filled with millions. Holy the mysterious rivers of tears under the streets. Holy the young juggernauts. Holy the best

lamb of the middle class. Holy the crazy shepherds of rebellion who thinks Los Angeles is Los Angeles.

I can see it in their eyes. My mother begging me not to pull the taper through my ear and stretch my lobe to the next size up. My dad so hurt and ashamed after his ears heard I don't believe in God.

Holy time and eternity. Holy eternity and time. Holy the clocks in space. Holy the fourth dimension. Holy the fifth international. Holy the angel in mollock(sp??). Holy the sea. Holy the desert. Holy the railroad. Holy the locomotive. Holy the visions. Holy the hallucinations. Holy the miracles. Holy the eyeball. Holy the abyss.

I admit I don't know why I want to do these things or where they come from in my head or why I usually don't take what's given to me as the right choice but it's what makes me, me, and I suppose I'm supposed to be a hipster.

EXPLANATION:

So that was a footnote to "Howl," by Alan Ginsberg and that was my best Alan Ginsberg impression. It's pretty good look it up. {laughter} Those were interspersed parts of my life, my culture, because as I was thinking about it, I really don't have a particular culture. I was the black sheep of my family—the oldest son, the only vegetarian, the only atheist, the guy who put body modifications besides my dad's Grateful Dead tattoo and he's by far the most rebellious of his entire family. It's just a way for me to come to terms with that in a way that I have constructed my own identity. My identity has been constructed between my friends and my social circle. I was involved in the slight counter-culture that was available in Catholic high school. I was a punker. I bought studded belts. I spray painted bridges on afternoons because I had nothing better to do. And from that I naturally progressed into beards, folk, and hipsters in high school

because I had nothing better to do. But really it's been a way for me to distinguish myself from the norm and become different and I put curls in my mustache because I can and I can signify myself as different. Thank you.