



# JEREMY SHAW

Jeremy Shaw works across film, installation, sculpture, and image-based practices to explore altered states of consciousness and the cultural and scientific drive to map and translate transcendental experience. Drawing on visual languages borrowed from documentary, peripheral cultures, science, and systems of belief, he constructs worlds that feel at once familiar and unstable. Moving between analog aesthetics and digital ruptures, his works suggest that perception, experience, and interpretation are in a constant state of flux.

STUDIO

What does *capture* mean to you – is it about holding onto something, shaping it, or changing it?

JEREMY SHAW

I've always felt that it operates in two distinct ways. On the one hand, I associate it with negative things – war, captivity, oppression – capturing something that should not, or does not want to be contained. And on the other, I think of it as something that can be kind of magical or mystical; capturing an aura, unseen properties, a mood or experience. Revealing things that elude our perception or usual means of recording.

STUDIO

Your work often uses visual languages we tend to trust – documentary, archival images, analog media. What interests you about that built-in credibility?

JEREMY SHAW

I find the assumed veracity of outmoded media to be a very generative place from which to work. Its presumed authenticity gives me space to bend and manipulate expectations by combining elements from disparate temporalities or ideologies within a familiar frame.

STUDIO

Do you think that trust still holds today? Or is it something that depends on having grown up with those image formats?

JEREMY SHAW

Although much of it is long outmoded, YouTube and other platforms extended the awareness of these formats to digitally native audiences. I think this has helped further imbue a kind of authenticity-via-historicity, without the need to have experienced it first-hand. That said, I believe all of this is now waning due to AI's seemingly endless potential for manipulation of media in general.

STUDIO

In *Cathartic Illustration*, you work with archival images of people in extreme states. What draws you to these moments?

JEREMY SHAW

My work has long revolved around notions of altered states. Whether that's experiential, ideological or empirical, I'm drawn to a seemingly inherent human aspiration towards transcendence, as well as the endless subjective interpretations of the term itself. The images in these works almost always depict subjects that align with this line of thought.

STUDIO

Many of these figures seem caught in states of catharsis, between ecstasy and collapse. Is that tension something you're drawn to?

JEREMY SHAW

Absolutely. One person's ecstasy is another's terror, and these experiences can often contain elements of both.

STUDIO

In *Towards Universal Pattern Recognition*, very different contexts come together, such as religion, dance, somatic practices, technology. Do they all relate to a shared search for transcendence?

JEREMY SHAW

Yes, I don't see a hierarchy between the methods of activation. The underlying motivation for this kind of searching can vary greatly, but the aspiration itself seems rooted in something more universal.

STUDIO

Do you think an experience loses something once we try to explain or analyze it?

JEREMY SHAW

No, I don't think it necessarily loses something, but it transforms. I find it really beautiful that we are unable to clearly elucidate profound experiences, that some things remain beyond translation.

STUDIO

In your seven-channel video, sound and light installation, *Phase Shifting Index*, each of the narrative films plays autonomously in the same room before everything begins to unravel and align. What interests you about that moment?

JEREMY SHAW

The work was conceived as a way to imagine groups of subjects in parallel realities co-existing across space and time, each attempting to physically alter their conditions through movement-based belief systems. These eventually begin to drift or derail, then align in a moment of synchronization, rupture, and cross-over into each other's worlds before dissolving into the

ether. It was an attempt to illustrate the billions of individual realities that co-exist simultaneously in our lifetimes and their potential for intersecting.

STUDIO

When everything synchronizes, the experience becomes almost overwhelming. Do you see that moment as collective, disorienting, or something else?

JEREMY SHAW

During the narrative section of the piece, the viewer can engage on their own terms: they can wander around the space, sit on benches directly in front of each of the seven films, or watch from a platform at the back of the room to take them in all together. The viewer has full autonomy. With the synchronized dance section, I wanted to revoke that autonomy and impose an inescapable climax that consumes the entire installation, leaving no way out. I see it operating on numerous levels, but it was engineered to elicit phenomenological responses, sensory and emotional.

STUDIO

Sound plays a strong role in that shift. Do you think it works on the body in a different way than images do?

JEREMY SHAW

Yes, definitely. There are elements of sound that can be empirically engineered to produce a specific physical affect, regardless of one's relationship to them. It can basically be targeted to enter the body and rearrange your insides. Images operate more subjectively and cerebrally, though there may well be some that are near-universal in the corporeal response to them. But sound can literally move you, even at the threshold of hearing.

STUDIO

Has working so closely with belief systems changed your own sense of belief, or has it left you more curious than convinced?

JEREMY SHAW

I continue to grow more curious: what prompts belief, how these systems evolve, what it takes to remain a believer, what happens when elements are combined or new ideologies are introduced, etc. These questions are a constant source of fascination for me. I'm a big admirer of belief.

STUDIO

And finally, what are you currently trying to understand – or let go of – in your work?

JEREMY SHAW

An inherent pull towards representation.





















