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Transcendental black metal manifesto

Liturgy Primavera Sound, Barcelona, 2012 (all images courtesy of artist, photo by Angelina Dreem) Hunter Hunt-Hendrix is the creator of Liturgy, a band from Brooklyn that plays transcendental black metal music as defined in the manifesto Hunt-Hendrix. Liturgy began as a solo project and in 2008 the band was formed after Hunt-Hendrix released his 12 Immortal Life. This EP was followed by the 2009 liturgical debut black metal album Renihilation. The band's second album, Aesthetica, was released in 2011, creating something of a storm of, as people attacked Hunt-Hendrix's approach to his music shot from a theoretical and philosophical point of view. While Aesthetica has prompted heated reactions across traditional ferrous circles, it has also attracted critical acclaim. I turned to Hunter Hunt-Hendrix to discuss Liturgy's latest album, Ark's Work, which is a radical novel style and quite there conceptually, musical, and dare I say arty. * Joseph Nechvatal: To frame our discussion a little bit, you should know that I have very limited interest and knowledge of black metal music, but I found work with my band liturgy, and your transcendental black metal manifesto, very convincing and, in fact, inspiring. I cited liturgy as inspiration for my nOise anusmOs show galerie richard (NYC 2012). Composer Rhys Chatham, a friend and occasional collaborator, first pointed his work out to me because of my interest in noise music. At that time you were quite bright in the media (2011/12) with the release of your album Aesthetica. So I wanted to catch up with what you're doing because – do you have any new recording and/or writing projects going on? Album The Ark Work Hunter Hunt-Hendrix: Yes. Over the last few years, I've slowly put together a new album, The Ark Work. We finished recording it last fall and it was released in March. It's a very dense and varied album - a much more diverse arrangement than Aesthetica. I also just finished a text titled Genesis Caul as Primordial Wound, which will be released in the journal Schism Press. And I am currently at work on an upcoming Black Metal Theory Symposium called Perichoresis music, art and philosophy, which describes a new kind of gesamtkunstwerk vision. All this is related to the mythology that I develop as an extension of ideas from the transcendental black metal text. JN: Great news. Let's get to each of these events. I listened to cut Quetzalcoatl in Ark Work, and it struck me as thinner and breezier than the black metal music you made in Immortal Life and Renihilation, two previous albums of yours that I also liked, or Aesthetica. All three drives have inconsistent fierce sound but while a lot of black metal music has negative energy in it, your music is ecstatic at its speed and constantly crescendo. Quetzalcoatl is an easier poise and eloquence about it that sounds different than you don't fucking shriek throughout the song. You kind of robotically stammer or chant, but it's still hazy, sophisticated sounds and speeds for me associated with liturgy. But now the sound is becoming more and more electronic. Quetzalcoatl is a feathered snake, mesoamerican deity and feather snake temple is the third largest pyramid name teotihuacan, up the site of the Colombian Aztecs in central Mexico. I assume that the mythology you mentioned is Aztec mythology? Hunter Hunt-Hendrix (pictured with Kevin Shea Adams) I could see why it might be how long ago I climbed to the top of that pyramid, as a huge black thunderstorm came rolling. That terrible and magnificent experience opened up an understanding of Aztec art in a way that no museum

or book could. Art became involved in a way that expressed unbearable connection to me with pre-the-world existence. If what I said sounds not all accurate, how does it link to your transcendental black metal: The apocalyptic humanism vision of manifesto text? How does Quetzalcoatl offer, if so, what is the new drive? HH-H: Believe it or not - although Quetzalcoatl is indeed a mythological figure - there is no particular link between Aztec mythology and arch work mythology. The song's title has no particular meaning. However, the album also includes other song titles that identify the numbers that play an important role in mythology: Kel Valhaal, Reign Array, Haelegen and Father Vorizen. But other song titles mean nothing. The relationship between mythology and record is strange. It's not so much an album that represents mythology or history. Mythology is an ethical system, a certain set of tools or a structure that I used to make music. In fact, it is the mythology itself that spawned the record. The main contour is something like this: 01010n is an unbearably powerful light. She wanted to give her light to someone, so she gave birth to S/he/im. But S/he/im couldn't contain the 01010n light and crashed as soon as s/he was born. 01010n withdrew from the scene, but left Genesis Caul, a little flickering light. Reign Array and Kel Valhaal have a task, led by Genesis Caul, to create poetic/cultural/symbolic structures that can work as prisms that would refract and reflect the 01010n light that one day perhaps S/he/im will be able to cover. As for music - yes, Quetzalcoatl is a departure from the sound of the last few recordings. However, this is not a particularly representative part of the album as a whole. JN: It's adorable. Your myth seems to be Nietzschean (S/he/im denies denial) and is very in tune with the modern mindset of having a fluid self-identity. For those who are not unschooled in continental philosophy, Nietzschean genealogy emphasizes the importance of interpretation of dogma. How else does Ark Work direct this anti-cultural heist? HH-H: The music on the record is very protean, you might say, after the human or at least internet era, to be a little more down to earth about it. I have tried to create agreements that synthesize organic and synthetic in tasteless ways - alternating between live horns, strings and bells and their MIDI equivalents - and citing different forms of music and use from medieval organism to trap rap. Although, of course, all this is in the frames of black metal. Diagram from the Transcendental Black Metal manifesto hunter Hunt-Hendrix I always think of these antinomies among live/synthetic, rock/classical, art/religion, fame/counterculture, emotions/repetitions, etc., and I think of the effort to transcend them as a sort of cyber alchemy. An apophitic effort to reach a certain philosopher's stone, a fusion of music, art and philosophy that would redeem everything in eschatone [or at the end of the world] if it were achieved. I see Alexander Scriabin and his efforts in creating mystery as the main inspiration. More specifically, he opposes this project in the music industry and his efforts to treat that musical career, efforts (with all its components, including labels, guides, blogs, staff, etc.) as a work of art. Here, the starting point is something like the ethics proposed by Alain Badiou: to be faithful to a truth that seems impossible. The truth of transcendental black metal is an effort to maintain a metal band, which at the same time is a work of art, business and hermetical quest. JN: As Ark Jobs is a conceptual project, I couldn't help but flash on Matthew Barney and his Cremaster cycle with his use of narrative patterns that resemble mythology. As you mentioned, you are seeking a new kind of gesamtkunstwerk vision, perhaps this is a good time to ask you about this vision. Does it include visual art and dance, as well as text/voice/sound? Is it something along the lines adapted from wagnerian opera theory – a total art that combines all the art into one expression – that came out of Wagner's seminal text das kunstwerk der Zukunft (Art of the Future)? How is your version of gesamtkunstwerk part of a larger monastery philosophy that I discovered in your Transcendental Black Metal manifesto? Perichoresis music, art, thought from the Transcendental Black Metal Manifesto hunter Hunt-Hendrix HH-H: Yes, hard consider the idea of Wagner and Barney working with Gesamtkunstwerk, although for me Beuys and Kippenberger are equally important as starting points. Not that these two are the same, but to me they complement each other with opposite slogans, everyone is an artist and every artist is a man. You should see the text I wrote in the now extinct magazine Lacanian Ink called New Music Drama, which is a comment on Wagner's text. The idea is that, given the state of modern subjectivity in the internet era, a true Gesamtkunstwerk can't be a spectacle on stage: it has to be a company that happens in reality, just like a rock band career. That the band's music along with its relationship with people, institutions, companies, blogs, magazines, etc. So I see the scandal caused by my manifesto on the Internet and the various personal difficulties that the group has experienced as something like a story or sculpture. Perhaps the best way to do this is this: as I see it, there are basically two kinds of Gesamtkunstwerk. One is the Wagner/Barney type, which includes a wide range of mythological material in an epic work that stands as a beacon of eternal truth in a place previously occupied by religions - crossing the art/religion divide. On the one hand, attempts are made to cross the art/life divide associated with Fluxus, Beuys, Kippenberger - artists who use all everyday activities as art to pierce the ideological veil of our times as a short-circuit. Artists who even use shame, humiliation, and abjection as material, as perhaps Bjarne Melgaard does when he writes a failed novel and turns it into a painting. My goal is to synthesize these two types of gestamtkunstwerk in, if you will, meta-Gesamtkunstwerk that is a philosophical/cosmological whole, a radical critique of representation, and an affirmation of the flow of life that includes your emotions, fears and failures. Why is that? Because the former Wagnerian type can easily turn to fascism. And because the latter is, in my view, not directly linked to certain objectively existing cosmic laws to which every age deserves access. The new liturgical album, The Ark Work, was released on March 23 at Thrill Jockey Records. Subscribe to our email newsletters! 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