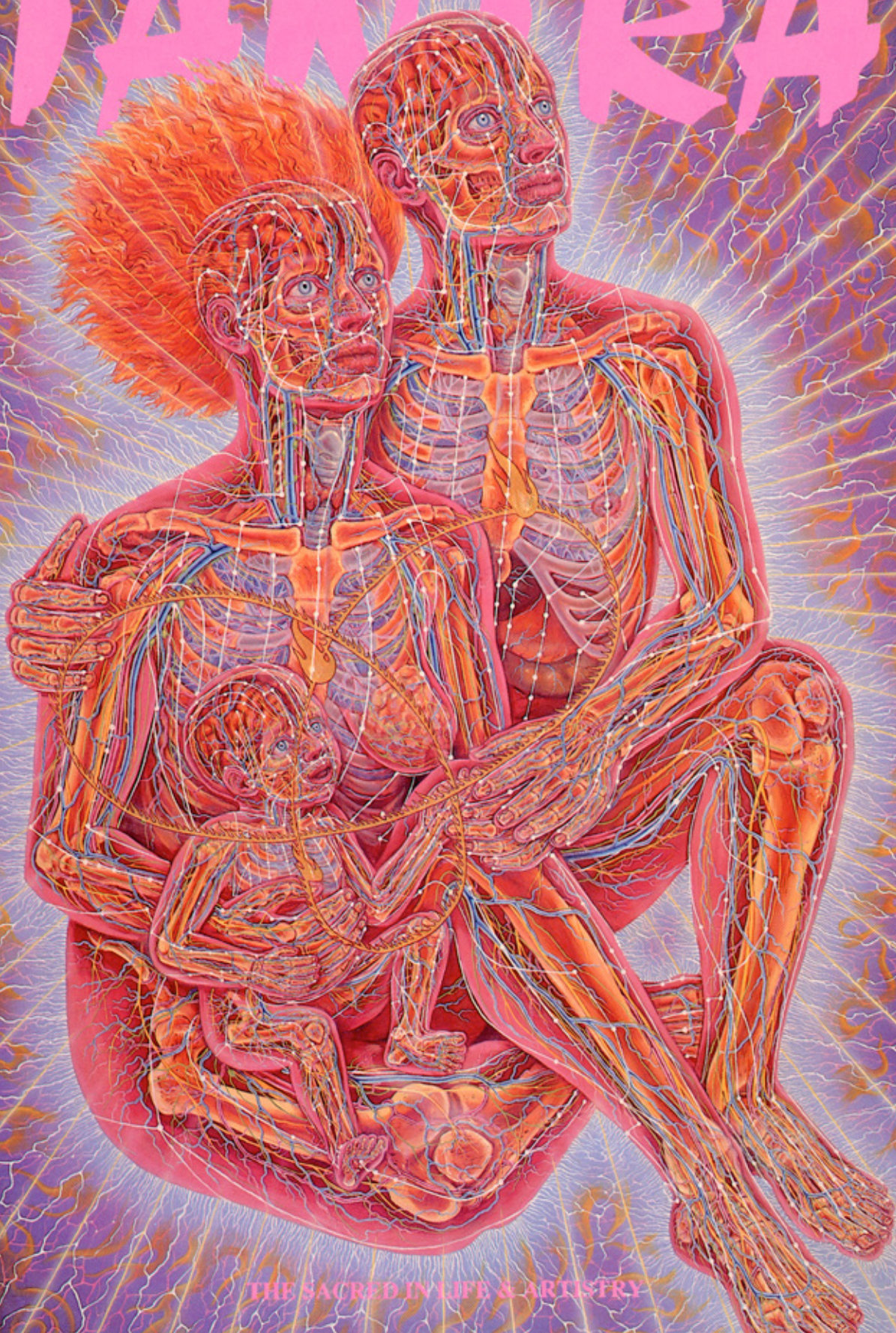


SACRED ORGASMS

ALEX & ALYSON
GREY

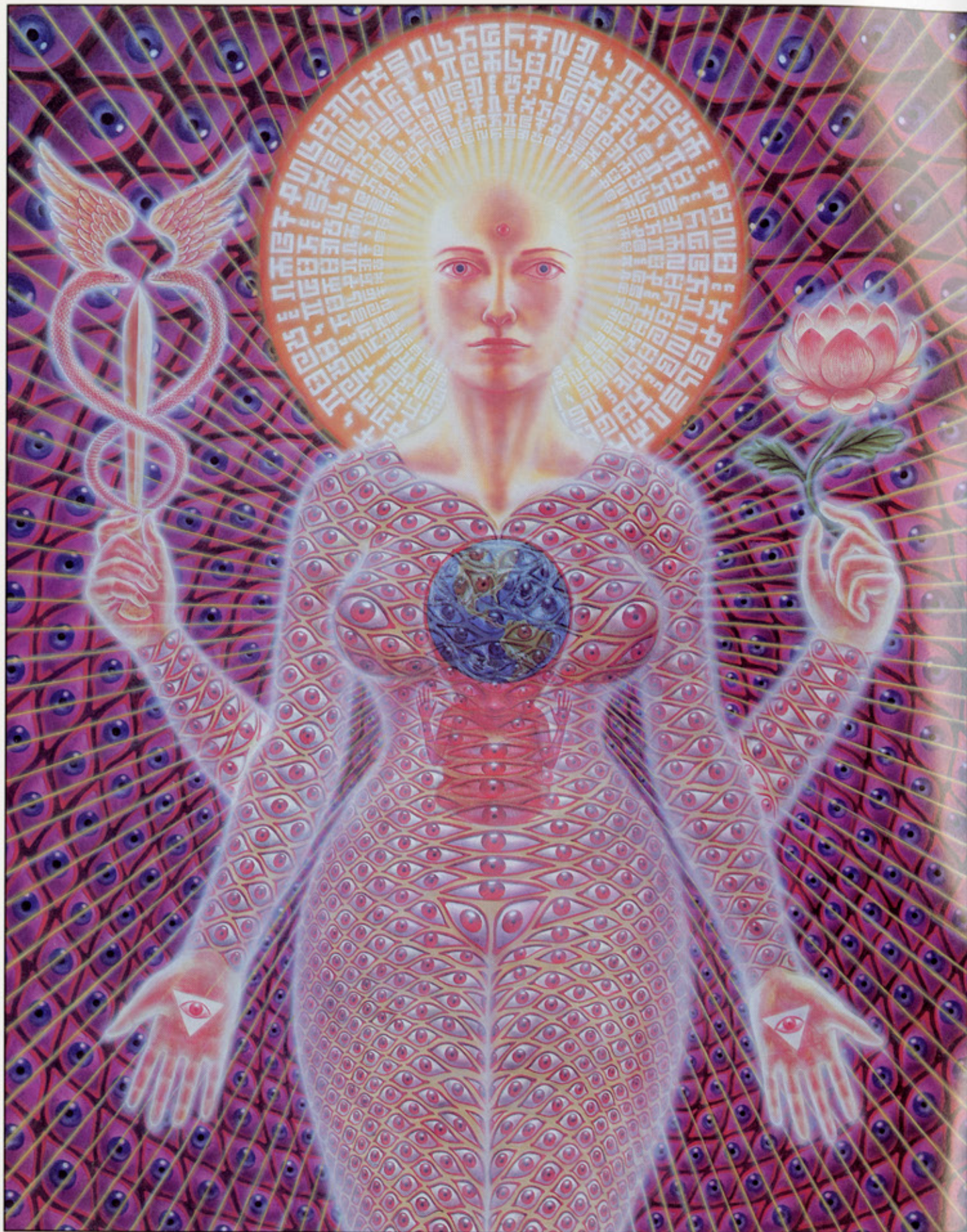
OMEGA ARTS

TANTRA



SOPHIA ISSUE #3 1992 \$4.50 USA

THE SACRED IN LIFE & ARTISTRY



SOPHIA (detail), by Alex & Allyson Grey
Acrylic on canvas, 84" x 46", 1989



KALU RINPOCHE by Marianna Rydvald

physical bodies; the geoprantic channels come into the pineal gland in the center of the brain. A double vortex system, with energy spiraling between heaven and earth, has a variety of ways of connecting with the subtle body Omega channels, but when the apex of the vortices focuses on the pineal gland the strongest connection is achieved.

Figure 3 shows the subtle body Omega channels closely connected with the physical body in the Omega mudra and posture *Butterfly Drifts Eternally*. The Omega energy travels with the spiraling motion of the hands. As the fingertips lead, the motion opens a spiraling Omega channel running through the hands, arms, body and legs. The radii of the spiral arcs vary with the different body parts. The spiral arc of the Omega channel through the hand and wrist is smaller, for instance, than through the arm and elbow.

The Omega channels easily connect with channels from other systems, such as the acupuncture meridians or the psychic channels of Taoist yoga. In fact, certain Omega mudras work to direct energy into specific acupuncture meridians. For example, *Omega Opening* is a precise mudra and posture with a wave-like motion that allows for a free flowing of energy in the heart meridian.

On one level it is possible to regard the harmonious Omega energy circulation as "simply physical." Working with internal energy at this level leads to deep relaxation, an experience of free flowing energy, a feeling of lightness, freedom from stress, and a subtle flexibility of the whole body. Because the hands are so facile in moving and directing vital energy, there is rarely any difficulty in getting an experience of energy flow. Yet the student may notice that there is a "hitch" somewhere. For instance, he or she may experience energy flow through the whole body except that there is no awareness of flow in a certain part. Perhaps, the flow stops at the throat. At this point, the student begins a study of these blocks. A block may be initially noticed as physical, but with continued work it may be seen that the block has an emotional, psychic, or spiritual nature. As the energy moves through the block and a harmonious circulation is gained on the etheric level, the student has a sense of wholeness and union with Spirit. Indeed, this is a healing experience.

Because the Omega work constantly returns to kinesthetic processing, it is easy to emphasize the physical aspect. But the essence of the Omega Arts is Mystical Union with the Higher Self and in a real sense the student embodies that union. The moment of union may be a sensation of the Divine entering the body, an acknowledgment of seeing the soul, a trance of ecstasy, or other

experience. The moment of union is an alignment of cosmic forces. The individual stands between heaven and earth; alignment is within and without. Thus such union is a part of our planet's psychic environment.

Polarity work is one way of reaching mystical union. Omega Arts makes use of the male/female polarity in a system of sexual alchemy. Although sexual energy is obviously body-oriented, it can be transmuted into psychic and spiritual energy. Actually this transmutation is a natural process that occurs at least to a very small degree in everyone but usually goes unnoticed. The alchemical meditations focus this natural transmutation. The whole meditative process used in Omega Arts may get very complex: Working with physical and subtle body sexual anatomy, spirit guides, erotic material, etc. The basic technique, however, is quite simple. Since everyone is a combination of both male and female, the meditator combines both male and female sexual essences to achieve a union. And since we have a predominance of one sex in our bodies, the alchemical work requires that the meditator identify the "opposite sex essence" within the body. Work with an individual of the opposite sex, including intercourse, is useful but not necessary for alchemical union.

The pineal gland in the brain is the focal point for the final union of male and female energies during meditation. When the alchemical union is accomplished at this locus, the Omega channels open and the high vibrational Omega energy is experienced.

With Omega channels thus opened, the Omega artist has an opportunity for greater spiritual development. For instance, a practical direction may be the integration of bliss states of mystical union into daily life. Developing psychic powers can be another benefit of the alchemical union. Of course, there are dangers in the ego becoming attached to the production of psychic phenomena, but the overall support of Omega spirituality helps keeps the practitioner focused on human universals.

Perhaps the most accessible benefit of Omega Arts is the healing that comes from the harmonious energy circulation of the moving mudra work. Many people comment on how easy it is to connect and play with the energy. The practice may be done when there is a specific problem suitable for mudra work. Also, the practice may be done with a daily exercise of as little as ten minutes per day. There is always a great amount of self discovery with mudra work, and it is usually easy to find an approach suitable for each individual.

After a few minutes of mudra work, one man I worked with described his hands

as moving in very definite natural pathways (i.e., the Omega channels), but he also noticed that he could "create his own channels much like we do with our own lives." After experimenting with the movement awhile longer, he found a resistance to the energy flow in the heart area. I showed him several moving mudras working with the heart chakra and guided him in a visualization. As he continued on his own, he visualized himself standing in a meadow with people coming to give him gifts. Afterwards he felt that he had gained greater awareness of a problem of his emotional heart: In the past he had not been able to readily accept gifts or compliments. Now he felt that he had "created a new channel" within himself to receive from others.

A dancer I worked with had suffered a severe dance injury connected with the sudden rejection by her lover. The injury to her leg was very painful and had gotten worse during two years as she continued to feel that anguish of rejection. She tried a number of healing methods, without permanent success. Over a seven month period as she worked with Omega movements and Guided Imagery and Music, she was able to overcome the pain of rejection and to move the healing Omega energy all the way through the injured portion of her leg. The pain increased as she began to get in touch with the energy movement in her leg. But this pain was transformed and gave way to a soothing feeling when the energy eventually moved through her leg. She learned how to elicit the soothing energy movement even as she went about her daily life.

The arts of movement, mudra, polarity, alchemy, meditation, and "symbolization" are the main constituent practices of Omega Arts. All of these arts hold the potential of mystical union. Omega movements and mudras harmonize the flow of the universal life force energy throughout the body. The exploration and balancing of various polarities create the Omega alchemy which harmonizes and unifies the chakras to produce a high vibrational energy. Omega Arts uses "symbolization", i.e., the making and using of symbols, in a complex system to achieve a convergence of symbols and spontaneous union. In Omega meditation one sits quietly in the harmonizing field of subtle energies cultivated in all other aspects of the practice. Omega Arts is a way of reaching union with our Higher Selves. It is a comprehensive system that works with the internal energies of the subtle body to achieve this union and experience The One. ●

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The Life and Art of Alex & Allyson Grey

Our Meeting

Alex. We met in 1975. Allyson and I had known of each other in art school, at the Boston Museum school, and had spoken a few times. Toward the end of the year, Allyson had invited me to a party at her home. At this party, a professor of ours had spiked the kalua and tequila with LSD and let me know that this was a *magical brew*. I drank a good deal of it that night, and Allyson drank the other part of the potion. That was my first LSD trip. I had the experience of going through a tunnel in my head spiraling around in the darkness, moving toward the light. It was a strange living mother-of-pearl kind of tunnel. I felt that this was a spiritual rebirth canal, a tunnel that everyone had inside of their heads. Meeting Allyson and taking the psychedelic at the same time brought about a spiritual awakening and a sacred bonding. The next day I called up Allyson to see how she felt and what she had experienced. We decided to get together that evening.

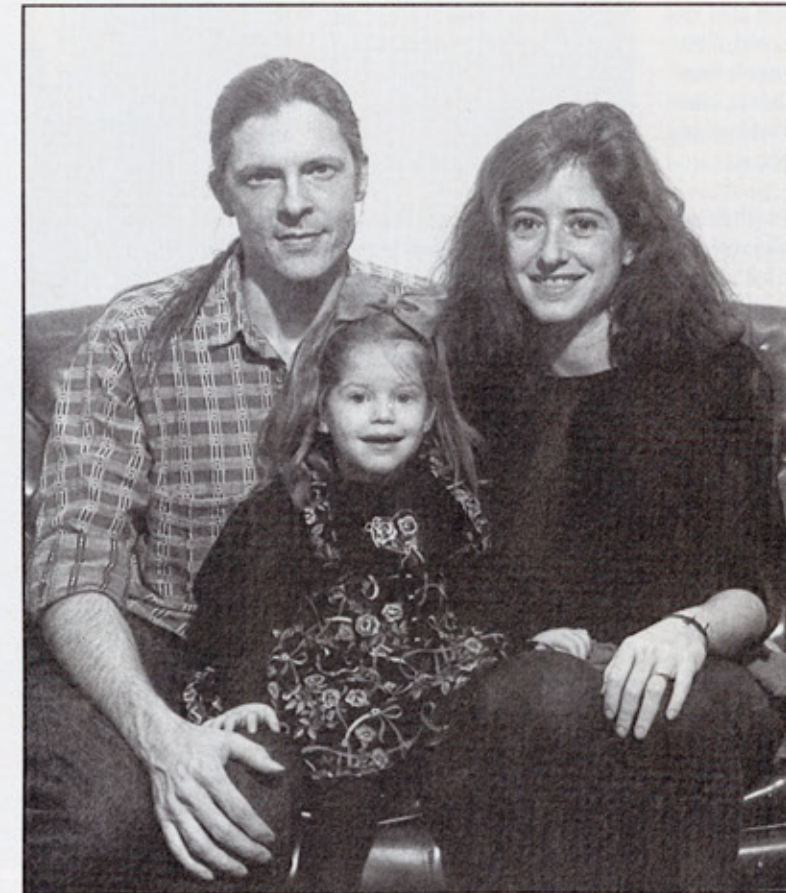
Allyson. I knew about Alex that whole year because of his amazing performances. Alex was a student at the school doing very unique work. He would put up notices that he was holding a performance, and I would always be sure to attend. Alex did things that were very challenging to me. He shaved half of his head and the other half of his hair was very long. I asked him why he did this. I thought he was trying to get attention and would give a cynical answer. Instead he was very sincere and described to me his investigations into polarities through performances.

Alex. Allyson was the only one in the whole

school who ever asked me the purpose of my work.

Allyson. While Alex was still a student, he travelled to the north magnetic pole. I was very impressed. From the first date, I realized that I had met a person who could fascinate me forever. We never left each other after that.

Being with Alex has been very challenging for me. Alex is always stretching his



Alex, Zena, and Allyson, 1991

willingness to confront difficult matters — life, death, humiliation, fear. . . . Because of my unwillingness to be left out, I've agreed to come along on most of these experiences. It is because of Alex that we have done things such as parachuting and walking on hot coals, doing various strenuous and difficult performances where we were confronted with humiliation, nakedness, the strain of meditating for hours, and many

things I didn't want to do initially. I would wish that Alex would have an attack of amnesia and forget about these challenges because I knew him to be a person who doesn't forget about things that are important to him. Alex challenges me, and I have grown because he always includes me and encourages me to be included. That is what it is like to be married to Alex.

Alex. Being married to Allyson is like being in contact with fully devotional, unobstructed Love and the sharp incisive wisdom of discrimination. Allyson has an incredibly steel trap mind for intuiting relationships between people. Many times when I am naive about my relationships with people, Allyson has a keen sense of observation and can usually smell a rat. She cares about my physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being — therefore I regard her as my greatest teacher and healer.

Zena

Alex. It was a great honor to be able to have a child together. Zena was a completely requested and prayed for child. I must say, it was Allyson's idea once again. We went up to a mountaintop and she had an agenda to discuss. We happened to be taking MDMA at the time. Allyson suggested that we would be incomplete in this lifetime without the teaching of having a child. I had to agree that out of this matrix of Love we shared, it would be selfish not to include another being if it was possible.

Allyson. We had already been together twelve years at that point.

Alex. It was two years before Zena was conceived. We realized it was essential to create a foundation of inner and outer resources for this child. In one particular

meditation experience, I was approached by two students of a being that they said might be interested in becoming our child. However, there were several things that we had to clear up in our lives. Our life-style at that time consisted of going to a lot of New York nightclubs and hanging out, smoking lots of dope and taking good drugs. All fairly positive experiences, but we had to purify ourselves and cleanse. Our inner guides

requested us to create a more stable home and financial base. We fulfilled those requirements over the next year and a half. We planned her conception on one particular day and performed a self-styled Tantric ritual. We got pregnant the first time we tried and Zena is the result.

Allyson. We always knew that she would be our Guru. We cleaned up our act for her. We've tried to mold our personalities so that we could be as loving and open-hearted to her as we could possibly be. And she has given us back infinite joy. That can't be expressed in words.

Alex. I will share one of the really bizarre things that she did. It was practically a year ago, around the time when she was just two years old. We went to a Chinese restaurant and after the meal, we all got our fortune cookies. Usually Zena would open hers up and hand us the fortune. This time Zena cracked open the fortune cookie and decided to "read" it herself. She said, "You have found your center and you are home." Allyson and I looked at each other in completely shocked amazement wondering how she could have spoken these words.

Allyson. She always surprises us with things she says. At eighteen months, she remembered her birth. She described her womb experience as being wet and warm and dark, and her birth as bright and happy.

Alex. Obviously we have to be teachers for her as well. It requires us to become authority figures. Being the teacher and being willing to learn from the child, re-experiencing your own childhood and working out your problems of parenting, is truly a great teaching.

Collaboration

Allyson. We did our first performance together in 1976 called *God's Art*.

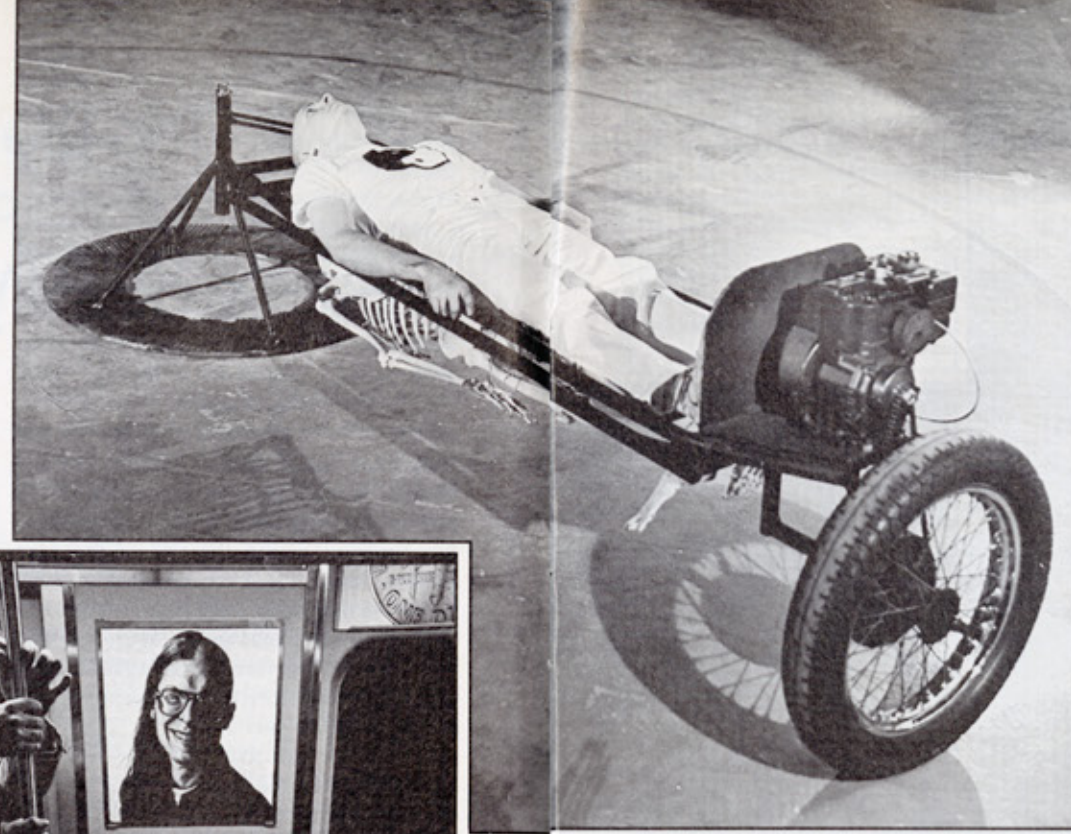
Alex. I was working in a museum of anatomy which was filled with thousands of samples of various pathologies as well as normal anatomical examples. There were exhibits full of bones, babies in jars and stuff like that. Somehow I felt it was all "God's Art". Physical beings and the entire phenomenal world is God's art. This was the visible display of God's created energy. I decided to create a museum label and, with Allyson, get inside of one of these large vitrines that we used to exhibit materials in the museum. We made love inside the vitrine under the title *God's Art*. This is the ultimate human act of creation or co-creation and reproduction of another being. Copulation was the source of

each of the anatomical displays. The bones of an individual were only there because of the love that brought a mother and father together and ultimately resulted in the birth of a living being. That person ultimately died and their bones were displayed there. I wanted to revivify, or give the living context to these beings from which the bones in the cases had come.

Allyson. There are two ways that we collaborate. One is in the performances and one is in our paintings. In our performances, the seed is Alex's. It is Alex's thread of imagination or inspiration that gets the performance going. I embellish on that, work on that, insert many of my own ideas, and Alex inserts his ideas. I respect his opinion and he respects mine. We work equally hard on the pieces, too. We put in physical work. There are things we have to make, paint, do, hire, call, arrange, whatever. It is as if Alex is president and I am the vice-president of the organization. We both work very hard, and that works for us.

We are also painters. Alex does his paintings and I do my paintings. We have occasionally dabbled on each other's paintings, but not that often. As far as the concepts, ideas and development of our paintings, we do tell each other what to do. I don't know what my paintings would be like if Alex hadn't given his personal opinion about what I might do. I also give Alex ideas and tell him things that he could do, and sometimes he uses them and sometimes he doesn't. We always comment or collaborate on each other's work, and if we come up with something that the other person really hates, we can drop the idea or feel even more strongly about it.

Alex. Allyson has an incredible design mind. She has a very intuitive and deep sense of organization. I will have certain ideas for paintings having worked them out with sketches, then submit these to Allyson for her critique. She may instantly point out aspects of them that should be changed. In my painting called *Theologue*, I had the meditating figure off to one corner, projecting the field of mountains from the forehead. Allyson suggested that the figure be central in the composition, and it changed the entire



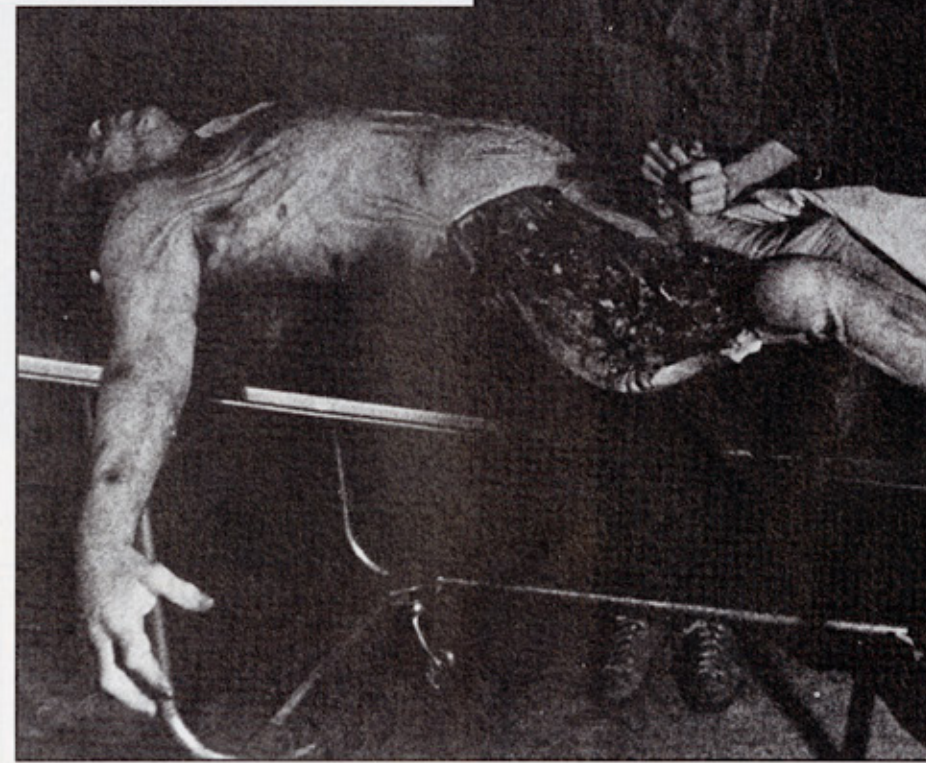
Human-Race, Overland Theater, Boston, MA, April 17, 1982. I created a special gasoline powered circular drive vehicle. The audience sat within two feet of the circle. I entered the space and pull-started the noisy engine which filled the space with the smell of gasoline. Laying down on the machine, I engaged the clutch, and it started rolling. The vehicle quickly accelerated to 25 or 30 mph spinning around the circle. Suddenly the base ripped out of the concrete; the machine was out-of-control heading toward the audience. Everyone screamed. But the machine stopped when I killed the engine. Later I thought about this piece as a metaphor of technology out-of-control. Initially it has an exciting and a mesmerizing effect upon us, then we realize it may kill us.



Private Subway, Boston, MA, Nov. 11, 1974. I took an hour long ride on the subway with a self-portrait in the ad slot.

painting. Having the figure in the middle clearly demonstrated what I wanted to say. With our consciousness we are each projecting the space that surrounds us. The vanishing point of the field of perspective, representing the network of space and time, is the same as the origin of the cone of perception.

Allyson has had an instrumental influence on the *Sacred Mirrors*. We had done a performance together in 1978 which was called *Life Energy*. We had the audience focus on different aspects of individual and group energy, and we went through a slide history of the various cultural and individual understandings of the nature of life



The Morgue, Boston, MA, 1975-1979. I worked in a medical school morgue where I studied the nature and appearance of death and the body. I did dissections, embalming, dismembering, and other preparations of the bodies.

energy. There were also a couple of charts that I had made for the performance. One detailed an anatomical view of the nervous system, suggesting the Western notion that consciousness is a by-product of biology and the nervous system. That contrasted with the other chart, the Eastern view, that was comprised of various life energy sys-



tems and psychic energy systems, the acupuncture meridians and points, the chakra system, and the auras surrounding the body. These charts had a small area marked in front of them where the viewer would stand and mirror these life-size images. On our way home from this performance, Allyson and I were talking and we

both agreed that the most successful element in this performance happened to be these charts. Allyson had the idea, "Why not create a large series of fully detailed paintings examining both the physical and metaphysical aspects of our anatomy?" Later on, after I had been working on the series for about a year, she also came up with the title *Sacred Mirrors*. So I have to credit her with the ideas for some of the most important work that I was then to do.

When the *Sacred Mirrors* were completed, we sculpted a large 5' x 10 1/2' frame. Then we faced the grueling task of making a mold and casting twenty-one frames to hold each of the paintings. This took several more months. We were physically and financially exhausted at the end of this project, but people were quite moved when the *Sacred Mirrors* went on exhibit at the New Museum in New York City in 1986.

Allyson. Alex always has ideas in groups. He will have one idea, then think of ten variations on that idea, and I will say, "Do one." I recommend diversity to Alex, because he has so many ideas. On the other hand, Alex advises me toward similarity, which is what my work really calls for. My ideas tend to be great leaping changes from one thing to another, and Alex, says "Do several of this kind." That has really worked, in my case. Our work does not look anything alike, although we have always felt that it comes from the same ground. We are making art about the same thing. Alex's subjects are more specific and more narrative, because he is a figurative artist — I am an abstract artist, and I attribute that to the fact that I am Jewish and my background has been to steer clear of graven images.

The Universal Mind Lattice

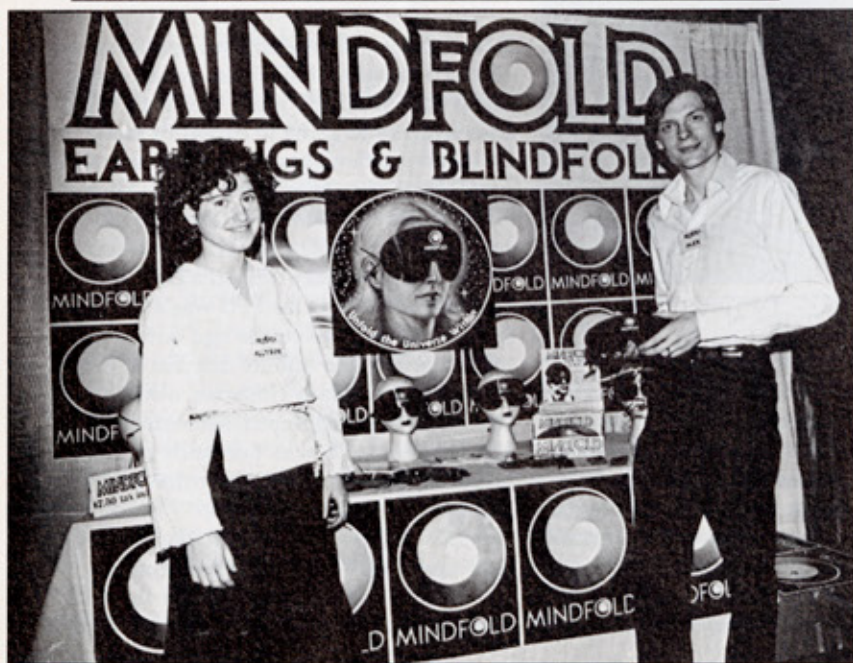
Alex. After our meeting we continued a sacred ritual use of LSD. I remember having come back from the north magnetic pole, directly prior to going to Allyson's party. I had been questioning what my performances were about. What was I looking for — in my work and in my life? For the first time I realized I was looking for God. Allyson is for me an experience of God's Love in the physical world and the LSD was a way for both of us to dissolve the ego boundaries and enter into the infinite domain of Love which God is. Many times we would take the substance lying in bed, sometimes with blindfolds on. It was one such occasion when we entered into a dimension that we call the *Universal Mind Lattice*. Trying to describe this space is a formidable task, and is always illusive, but we will attempt it.

The dimension is outside of the continuum of space and time that we com-

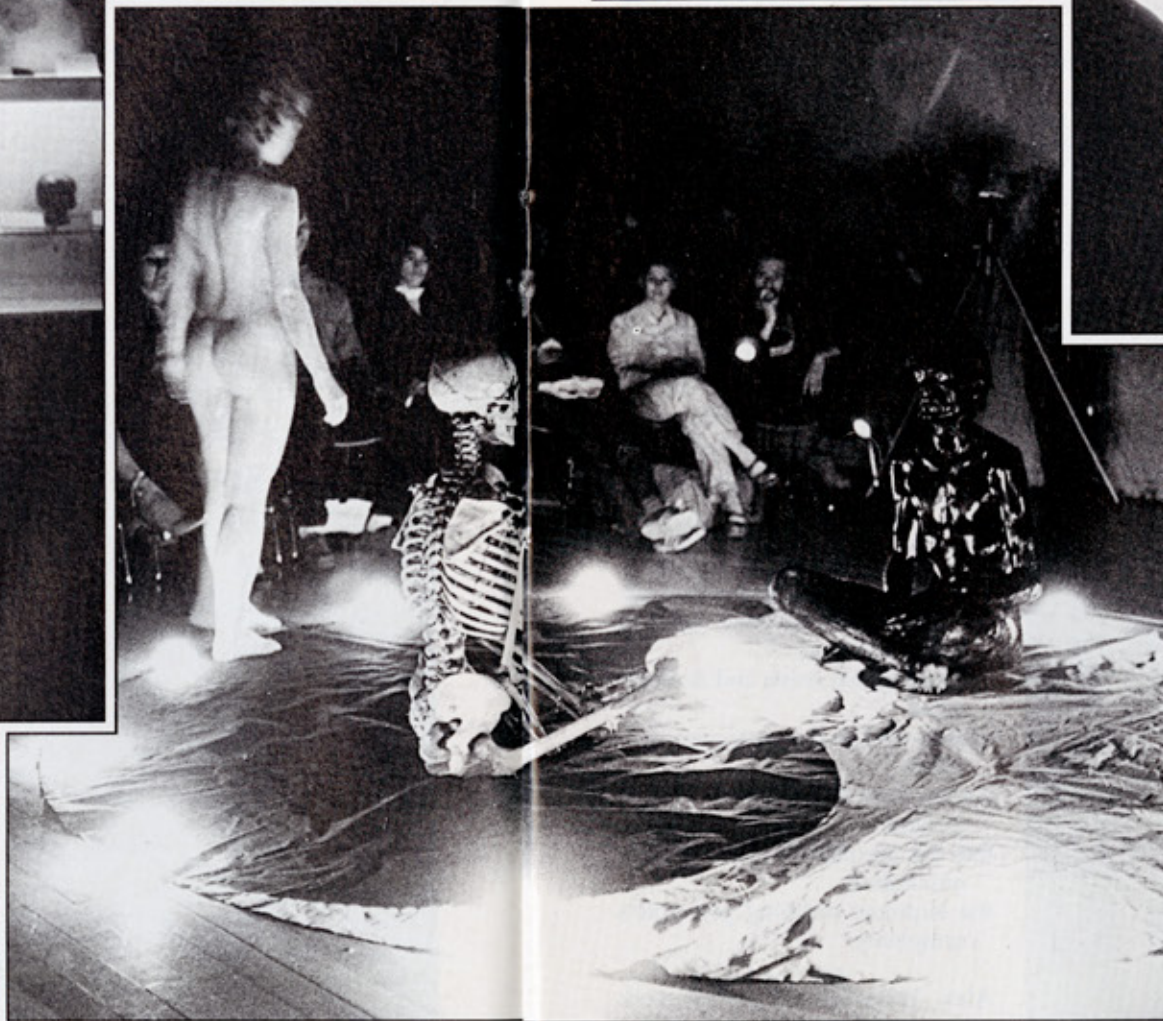


God's Art, Anatomical Museum of Boston, Aug. 25, 1978. Exhibited in a large glass case, Allyson and I made love.

The Mindfold. In 1978, Allyson and I began commercial manufacturing and sale of the Mindfold, a device which blocked out sight and sound -- a blank screen intended for observing the art of the mind, the self-illuminating void. We assembled 2,500 Mindfolds which were sold through the world in selected stores and by mail order. The price was \$8.50 which included an instruction book. We sold the business in 1980. Mindfolds are still manufactured today by a company in Tucson, AZ, called Mindfold Inc.



Prayer Wheel, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Feb. 15, 1983. Allyson and I were tied together painted gold with a skeleton and a baby doll, attached to a large black cylindrical prayer wheel. The intertwined polar combinations of male/female, birth/death, was an externalization of the polarities of the self that keep in motion the prayer wheel as an engine of spiritual transformation. We intoned the mantra inscribed on the wheel, and slowly circumambulated in walking meditation for a period of 1 1/2 hours.



Meditations on Mortality, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY, Apr. 17, 1980. Meditations began in darkness with a tape of chanting Tibetan monks played at high volume. Allyson entered naked covered with white grease paint, carrying a lit candle, followed by myself, naked and covered with black grease paint. Together we moved into the central space, a large yin/yang circle on the floor. While I stared in meditation at a human skeleton seated opposite him, Allyson lit candles around the perimeter of the circles. Then we met and stepped outside of the circle. For a brief period accentuated by flashing strobe lights and the sound of horns & drums, we frantically embraced effectively combining our two pigments into grey.

Performance Art

Living Cross, Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago, IL, Oct. 15, 1983. For three hours, Allyson and I laid motionless on the ground with our eyes closed. Surrounding us were hundreds of roses and two thousand apples arranged in the shape of a cross. Hanging above us was a rotting Angel of Death holding an infinity symbol. Gregorian chants were played as hundreds of people observed the performance.



monly experience in the material or phenomenal realm. Our consciousness transcended the physical body, and we entered an infinite realm where all beings and things are obviously, immediately, and spontaneously interconnected. Each being and thing is a node in this network, a network that extends infinitely, omni-directionally, and is composed of Divine Love. This is the energy that is running through all beings and things. We all share the same energy. There is a breakdown of all boundaries — of the boundary between self and other. We saw that we are the same as all other beings and things, yet we are an important node in the network of consciousness. We gained an instant rapport and sacred connection with all beings and things. All the energy is moving from one being into another, each being simultaneously a *fountain* and a *drain* of light. The strands or emanations of energy are composed of a rainbow iridescence of clear light. It all arises out of a ground of seeming emptiness.

This was the mystical experience that became the foundation from which our art would emanate. Our attempt from that point forward was to express in our artwork this interconnectedness of all beings and things that we experienced through the Universal Mind Lattice. And we each went about doing that in different ways.

Allyson. My painting *Jewel Net of Indra* is my abstract presentation of this unified field of spiritual light. Indra is the Hindu God of space, and the "net" is his device for creating space. At each point, where the fibers of the net intersect, is a jewel. Each jewel has infinite facets, each facet reflecting every other jewel in the net. It has the properties of a hologram, each part reflects the whole.

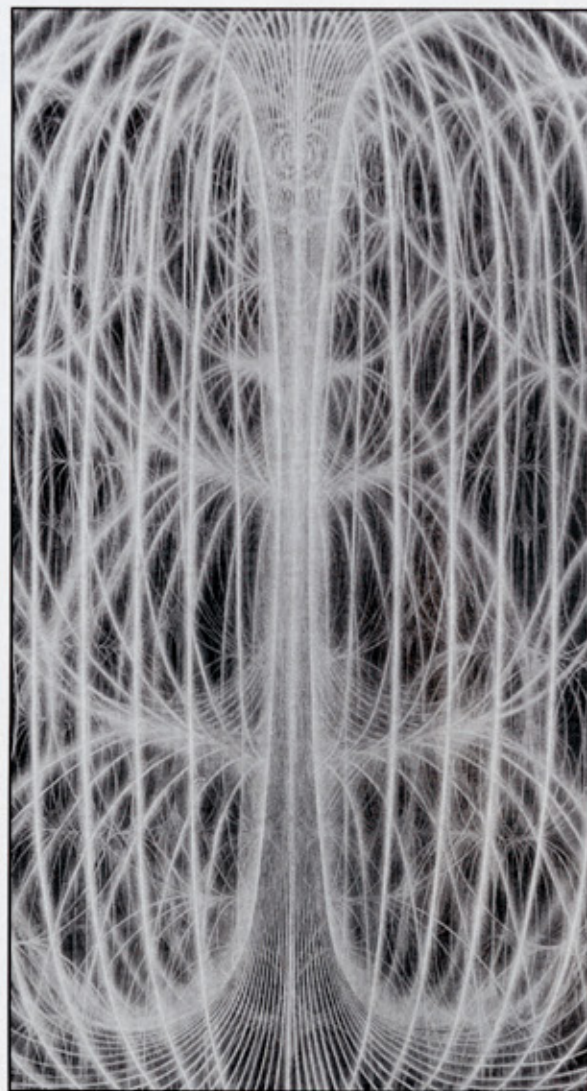
Alex. My painting series, *Sacred Mirrors*, show the progressive dissolving of the physical body into the Universal Mind Lattice. I wanted to provide a visual portal back into the domain of unbroken unity and the luminous clear light network. Although the painting looks abstract, I am representing what the lattice actually looked like in my experience.

Spectrums and Secret Writing

Allyson. In 1978, I started work on a series of paintings in which I used a spectrum from blue through purple to red to orange to yellow to green to blue again. I used squares

as cell-like units, one hundred squares making a spectrum. Using that block of spectral squares, I created images of both chaos and order. In the chaotic organizations, the hundred squares would explode like confetti and, like the process of entropy, then coalesce. The "order" paintings include mandala-like configurations and fields of patterning which remind me of images I saw while I was tripping. During those times, I saw many fields and multi-colored strands of energy and this has been my way of representing it.

Before I met Alex, I was working on a



UNIVERSAL MIND LATTICE by Alex Grey, Acrylic on canvas, 84" x 46", 1981.

secret alphabet. It was an automatic kind of writing that came to me and I really didn't take it seriously. Alex suggested I make art out of it. I created labor-intensive ink drawings of automatic writing which I called *Secret Writing*. They were done with tiny letters filling large papers (20 x 30 inches). I made stampers and I made books. I had a major show of this work in 1976 and soon

after began the *Spectrum Series*. After Zena was born in 1988, I felt my life had changed so dramatically that I needed to change my work dramatically too. I had done the *Spectrum Series* for ten years. I started to try all sorts of unsuccessful new ideas. Then I put the *Secret Writing* back into the work and made the spectrums into grey scales. In some ways, it was a maturing and seriousness that made me want to work in black, white and grey using some red.

The writing is not translatable. It abstractly refers to the spiritual writing of all religions. It doesn't state philosophy or quote anything. All the religions of the world have sacred writing. But I wanted to get away from specific references that one might have when they see sacred writing of a particular culture. My letters are about the inexplicable sameness that underlies all religions and people.

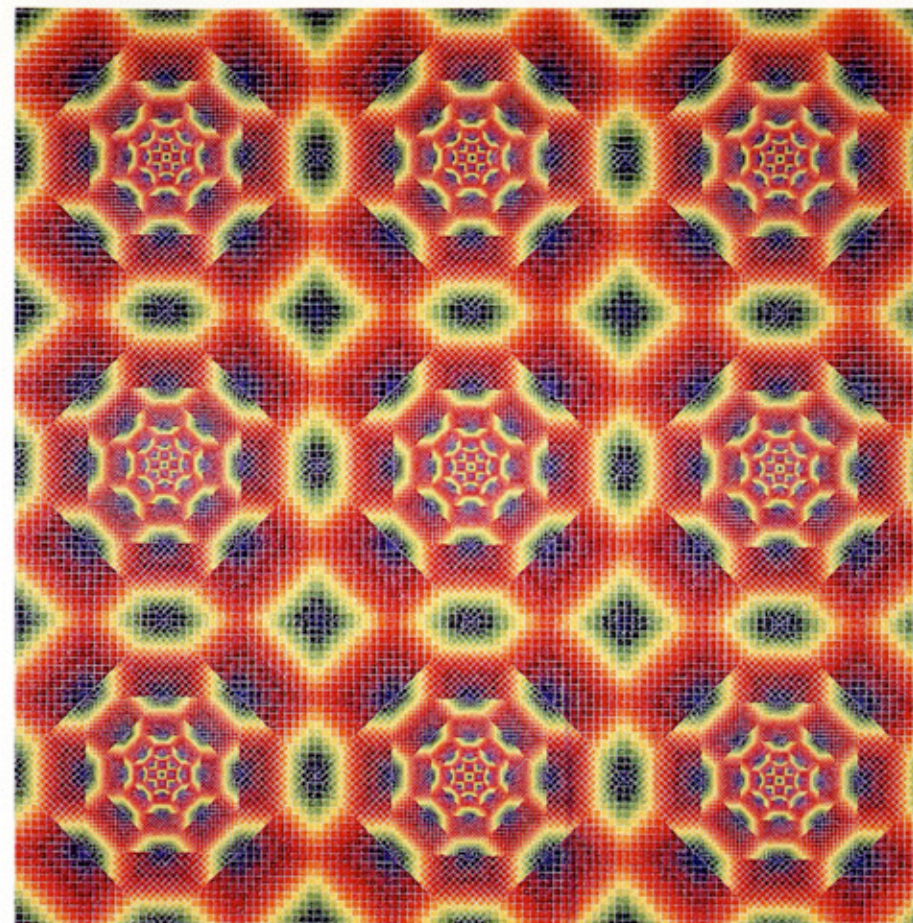
There is a quote from an ancient text by the Dzogchen Master, Garab Dorje, that is spoken by the force of universal creativity, the Ati Buddha. It is about the structure of reality, and it has application in describing my work.

"Listen, this teacher of teachers the majestic creative intelligence, displays the integrated structure centered around the inner reality of communication, everything that exists and is designated displays itself as linguistic communication coming from the unborn field and is gathered into this inexplicable reality of communication, the supreme ordering principle's symphony."

Alex. The geometric abstract work relates to the networks of light that we experienced in the Universal Mind Lattice. I feel that the letters come from a similar mystical dimension. I remember during various trips seeing these letters appear over Allyson's flesh. Allyson made a guest appearance on the *Sophia* painting in the *Sacred Mirrors* and painted her letters there herself. *Sophia* has letters emanating from the being who represents the feminine aspect of transcendent wisdom. The letters in some way point to the wisdom beyond the rational mind.

Meditations on Mortality

Alex. In the mid-seventies I got a job preparing bodies in a medical school morgue and



JEWEL NET OF INDRA
by Allyson Grey
Oils on wood
40" x 40"
1988

CHAOS
by Allyson Grey
Oils on wood
16" x 16"
1987





TANTRA by Alex Grey
Oil on linen, 24" x 30", 1991



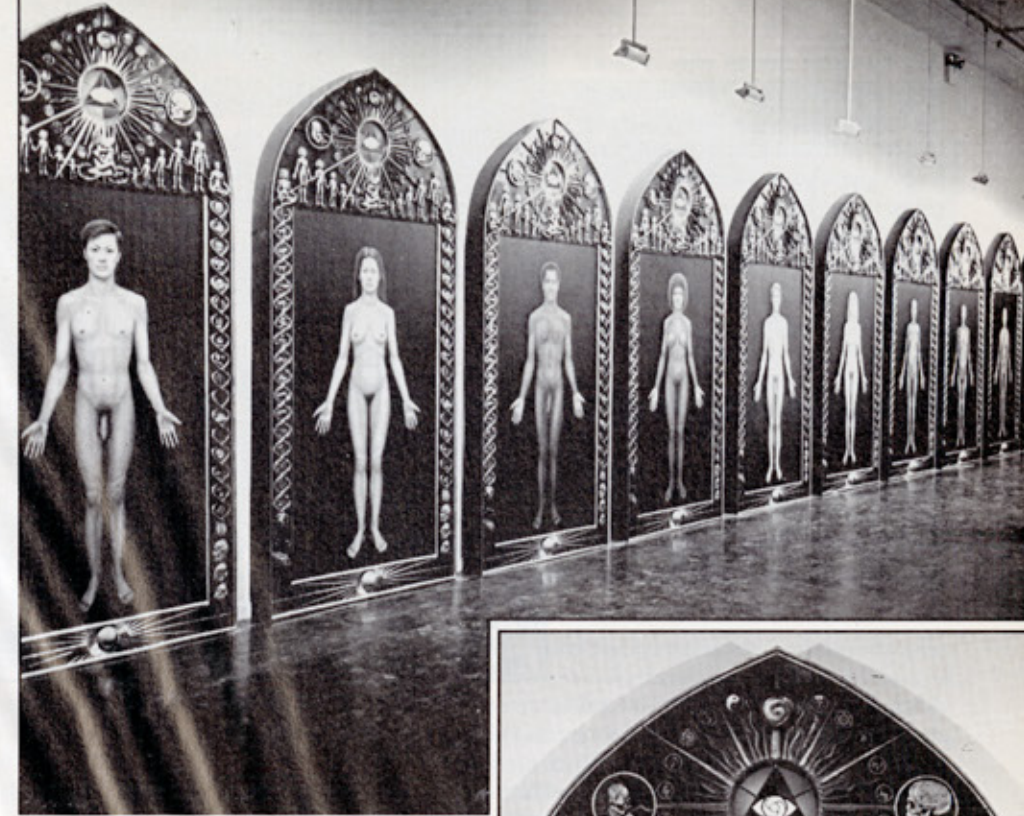
BIRTH by Alex Grey
Oil on linen, 44" x 60", 1990-1



ZENA LOTUS by Alex Grey
Oil on linen, 24" x 30", 1990

performed a variety of tasks there that included some of the most bizarre actions that I will ever have committed in my life. One of the jobs I had included dismembering bodies — cutting off hands, feet, heads of dead people — for various classes. They would only want particular sections. This tells you something about the state of medicine and how it looks at the body piecemeal. At any rate, it was a confronting adventure full of surprises. It was sometimes horrible to see the bodies arrive at the morgue. I have seen bodies in every state of decomposition — those in rigor mortis and those that were bloated and black. One of the most amazing sights I saw was a body that had every color of the spectrum on it. In its decay process, brilliant reds, purples, greens, and blues had bloomed across the surface of the skin and had made for an amazingly intense vision. Add to that my dawning spiritual life, repeated doses of LSD, and mystical experiences. Through confronting these cadavers, I was coming to terms with separation of consciousness from the body. Having read the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, I encouraged the spirits of the deceased to go toward the light.

There were performance pieces that I did in the morgue with the bodies and in the museum with malformed fetuses. When I look back on those pieces, the real intention was to confront my own mortality, or the subject of death. I felt that death was the ultimate polarity. I always feel that my art work has to do with the examination of polarities. I have been attracted to the subjects of birth and death (the ultimate parentheses of life), the interactions of male and female, light and dark, and all of the dualities that compose our phenomenal world. Addressing the subject of death seemed to be the perfect extension of the examination of polarities. Coming into the morgue I had



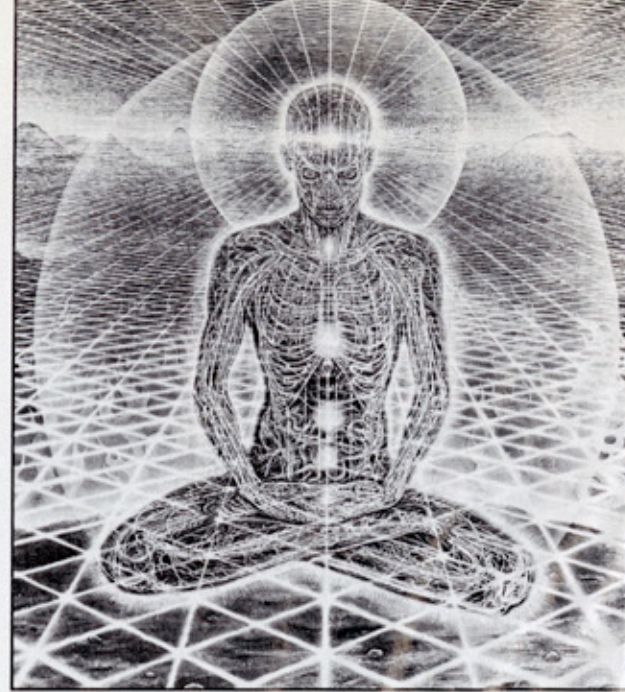
an existential materialist outlook toward the bodies. They were empty. There was no one home. They were just pieces of dead meat.

Over the years that I worked there, I developed a sensitivity to the Dead and came to feel the body is sacred when dead. One should respect the body even though the consciousness has gone. Mortality became an integral part of my work from that point. I wanted to acknowledge in my artwork the foundation of impermanence. So when I do these X-ray type figures, one sees the bones and the fragile network of tissues and veins that compose the insides of our bodies. This acknowledgment of our lim-



PSYCHIC ENERGY SYSTEM by Alex Grey, Acrylic on linen, 84" x 46", 1980. Construction of the frames for the Sacred Mirrors Exhibition

ited life-span causes one to recall and appreciate the preciousness of life. I have painted archetypal experiences such as kissing, copulating, or pregnancy, and family relationships. One might forget about the preciousness of human life if I painted these people with the skin and rendered them in a normal representational way. It could become saccharin — over-used and over-seen images of intimacy. I try to press beyond our normal visual limits by presenting the interactions of the dimensions of body, mind and spirit. Mind and spirit are indicated by subtle energy emanations and sacred symbols.

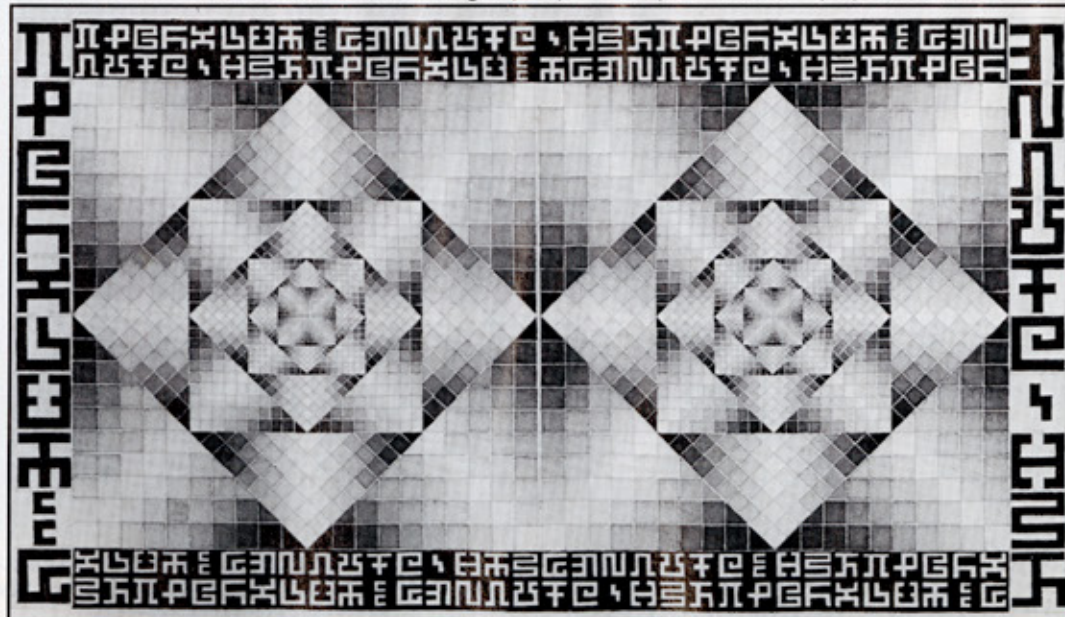


Detail of **THEOLOGUE**, by Alex Grey, Acrylic on Linen, 60" x 180", 1986

Alex. Now, to discuss a much used and perhaps a much abused term, Shaman, in reference to my artwork.

In the book *Sacred Mirrors*, Carlo McCormick used the example of the Shaman to describe the performance rituals that Allyson and I have done over a number of years. I don't mind the work being analyzed in the context of Shamanic activity, but I don't consider myself a Shaman, because I am an artist, a contemporary artist, and I haven't grown up in a Shamanic tradition. I haven't gone out of my way to become a Shaman in the terms of the Huichol or other Indian and indigenous cultures of the world. I haven't gone through years of training with the Shaman to learn their specific powers. I have great respect for that tradition, and I think it is pretentious for one who has not done the work to go and call themselves a Shaman. However, the works that Allyson and I have undertaken do have a certain correlation to rituals and visions familiar to Shamanism. The phenomena of Shamanic X-ray art occurs cross-culturally worldwide. There are drawings and paintings that show the bones through them, and Huichol Shamanic art shows the energies emanating from the body as well as the X-ray figures. I think that this refers to the clairvoyant capacity to see with the X-ray vision that these Shaman had acquired. I have gotten letters from various clairvoyants and healers who claim to see the human body as though it were translucent, looking much like my X-ray paintings.

DOUBLE MANDALA w/ Secret Writing, by Allyson Grey, Ink wash on paper, 14" x 8", 1991



Healing and the Sacred Mirrors

Alex. As part of my unfolding spiritual life, I became interested in the subject of healing in art. The *Sacred Mirrors* were created as a healing tool presenting the physical and metaphysical anatomy for the viewer to mirror and resonate with whole and healthy systems. By painting the anatomical systems in a precise and detailed way, the viewer is seduced into accepting the occult energy systems as equally real.

There are 21 *Sacred Mirrors*. The first seven pieces focus on the physical body. The next seven pieces deal with the mind or the socio-political realm, the races and sexes. The object here is to see oneself reflected in

others. The final seven pieces show the complete dissolving of the physical body into a field of light, which is the Universal Mind Lattice. The next painting in the *Sacred Mirrors* is *Void Clear Light*, an experience that is actually unrepresentable. One could choose a blank canvas, but I felt that would be more referential to the art style of minimalism, rather than the psychological experience of emptiness. I resorted to using the symbols of the elements of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and the Kalachakra symbol which means time-wheel. Among the many meanings of the Kalachakra symbol is the transmutation of the elements by the principle of emptiness or sunyata. After the *Void* come the Deity archetypes: *Avalokitesvara*, the Buddha of Active Compassion, *Christ*, the Western Boddhisattva, and my feminine representation of the Godhead, in *Sophia*, with a field of eyes representing infinite wisdom. These mystical eyes connote primordial awareness or universal creativity from whence all beings and things emerge. The last piece in the series is the *Spiritual World*, an actual mirror, into which a network of light has been sand-blasted. One of the goals of the *Sacred Mirrors* is to create a context in which one sees the entire world as sacred with oneself included in that world. The ultimate Sacred Mirror is the true nature of the mind, our potential for infinite reflectivity which can never be portrayed, but can only be pointed to.

It is our intention to create a chapel of
(continued on page 60)

Sacred Orgasms A New Paradigm

A candid interview with
Kenneth Ray Stubbs, Ph.D.

Edited by Alan & Susana

Illustrations by Kyle Spencer

More than most of us, Kenneth Ray Stubbs has vigorously confronted his sexual and religious programming. Compelled by a spiritual quest, he has continuously questioned the unconscious conditioning in his life, occupation and culture. His growth has gone through many stages — from exploring sensuality, the subject of his first book called *Romantic Encounters*; to fully embracing his sexuality, leading to his best-selling book *Erotic Massage*, a book too "shocking" to be carried in New Age bookstores; to totally accepting his spirituality in his forthcoming work called *Sacred Orgasms*. In this latest unfolding, he proposes a *New Paradigm*, a model that can dramatically augment New Age philosophy and radically alter Middle America's view on sexuality and spirituality. Simply stated, our esoteric systems — chakras, nadis, aura, light body, spirit body — can all have orgasms. Though not physical or even sexual in origin, these out-of-the-ordinary orgasms are energy phenomena that when cultivated can greatly enhance our spiritual growth. In the following candid conversation, Dr. Stubbs traces the explorations that has led him to this realization.

On His Early Years

I grew up as a Southern Baptist. In that religion there is a division between Spirit and Flesh. Flesh is sinful, inherently sinful, because of Adam and Eve; Spirit is really where we want to go, it is heavenly — of God. Flesh really means sex, and sex is evil; for if you indulge in sex too much, you will not go to heaven, you will be cast out of Eden forever. God will not like you, therefore you must go to



hell. This is my Southern Baptist background, but I am sure it applies to Catholicism, as well as many other fundamentalist traditions. All have the premise that to the extent we indulge in the pleasures of the flesh, we will not get to heaven. It seems to be OK to do just a little bit and then obtain forgiveness from the minister or priest.

This is a classic control mechanism. Everyone has varying degrees of sexual feelings or sexual numbness. Sooner or later though, everyone will have sexual desire about one's husband/wife, or for a certain sex, and will feel guilt and shame until one obtains forgiveness. By making sex evil, but providing a way of repentance through absolution by a priest, being re-baptized, born-again or, in the Southern Baptist Church, recommitting, — the church allows one to still get into heaven. Yet this whole guilt/shame/forgiveness process keeps one under the church's control.

Somewhere along the way, I really sensed that this was not true — what the church was saying was not valid. So at age seventeen, during my senior year in high school, I declared that I was an atheist. Given my Southern Baptist background, I couldn't simply have explored and asked what is the nature of spirituality. One is or one isn't, it is not open to discussion. If someone said why don't you pray to God about this . . . it doesn't work that way, I can't pray to God and ask if atheism is real. At the same time, I started reading books about the religions of the world, books on yoga, awareness and other things.

