

# **OBSIDIANA – times of uncertainty**

## **Introduction**

Obsidiana is an international art show that draws together contemporary artists whose work touches in some way with an interest in the occult as a possibility or strategy for revealing the unseen.

The Art Show will present mediums of performance, photography, video, sound and installation from artists based in London and The Americas.

During the course of the Show there will be a series of live Events in forms of performative lectures, laboratory experiments, multi-disciplinary academic discussion, music and sound poetry. Inspired by the process that John Dee documented his investigations in a notebook, we will construct a digital notebook based on observations of the art works with content generated from the events, documented writing, photography and video, allowing for the possibility of digital pathways to connect in non-geographical space.

The title of the show, Obsidiana comes from the word 'Obsidian' the unclassifiable glass type mineral that forms when silica from volcanic lava cools without crystal growth. It is formed from the obsidian flows at the margins of the lava eruption. It has been used by ancient and contemporary cultures to make instruments and sacred cult objects.

The Aztecs used a mirror of Obsidian in which to foresee the coming of magic and healing in the form of Quetzalcoatl. John Dee the English mathematician, scientist, cosmologist and alchemist, advisor to Elizabeth I, used an Obsidian mirror taken from the Aztecs by Hernan Cortez for channeling unseen knowledge. Through his medium, Edward Kelly, he transcribed a new language of the Occult world, The 'Enochian' script. The Obsidian Mirror has been used for transcendental communication but has also a direct means to influence political situations.

## **Context**

The last year of chaos in the advanced capitalist system has led to a distrust in the western global economic system. Politicians are grasping for new ideologies for the systems of economic control. Philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment are being questioned as Governments reach for greater authority in the times of uncertainty.

The occult rests on the edge of this uncertainty. It offers possibilities for communicating and feeling with the unseen. It reasserts the body as a potential for connecting with unseen energies and flows. It can be seen as a vehicle for realising social change.

Contemporary artists are looking to the occult as a source of inspiration for making work that is in some form out of the rational. The Occult provides a methodology for creating works in an unregulated context.

This show will locate contemporary art and the occult together as a strategy to examine the body and its relation to the unseen, its possibilities for being sensed by the public and its reflection on the urban space.

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