

# Another Man

LIFE & CULTURE

## Capturing the Artistic Experiment that Inspired Burning Man

May 8, 2018



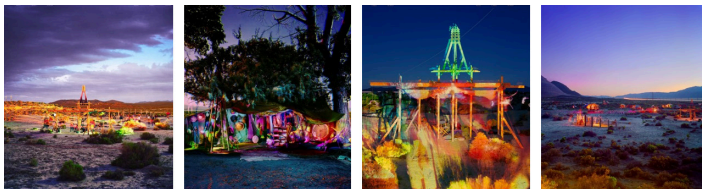
Celtic Endless Knot. Through Day and Night\* Ritual at Paul Windsor's sand drawing – a pathway tracing a Jungian archetypal symbol of the Continuum of Mind."

### William Binzen's series 'Waking Dream' captures the radical living art installation titled 'Desert Siteworks'

Burning Man festival is famous. However the living art installation that preceded and inspired its ethos and aesthetic are less well-known. In the early 1990s, California-based art photographer William Binzen initiated 'Desert Siteworks', a three-year experiment that saw radical artists and performers gather together in Black Rock Desert in Nevada. Here, they created "interactive, intentional performance communities" which Binzen captured in Dadaist images, published here.

More recently, Binzen has been working on a documentary about Desert Siteworks, titled *Waking Dream: Desert Siteworks & the Coming of Age of Burning Man*, which is set for a 2018 release. Here, ahead of this documentary and alongside his *Waking Dream* images, the photographer tells us more about this fascinating experiment and the ideas behind it.

## GALLERY



Waking Dream by William Binzen

*"Desert Siteworks was an artistic experiment in 'temporary community' from 1992-1994 that was conceived by me and supported by John Law and others from the San Francisco Cacophony Society. Judy West was my co-producer the second and third years. Over Summer Solstice at various hot springs in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada, we crafted and implemented a philosophy of collaborative art as life. To integrate conscious, deliberative photography with community building; to create art for both self and tribal transformation; to live each moment of our desert sojourn mindfully in community with a spiritual anima expressed through group dramatic play using a base of old rituals to reinvent ritual for our time: these were the goals of Desert Siteworks. It was the experimental sister project to brother Burning Man (contributing greatly to the latter event's aesthetic, for which I was an early years' collaborator and photographer).*

*"Nominally, my work is based in the documentary tradition (I use a camera faithfully to record a scene), but as art, my work aspires to metaphoric and symbolist intent. I've always wanted to convey the inner experiences of an aesthetically tuned participant. How do light, form and colour affect us and alter perception? How might I represent feeling states through colour? In post-production – for select photographs – I create miniature abstract mixed-media paintings on glass. I composite them in, where appropriate, making artistic Rorschachs. I'm looking for 'equivalents', abstract forms and colour with feeling. I want to hold viewers' attention to daydream, to imagine."*

Head here to see more from the Waking Dream series, including William's captures of the early years of Burning Man. And head here to pre-order William's documentary/art film telling the story of the series, Desert Siteworks, and the beginnings of Burning Man



ANOTHER MAN

[MAGAZINE](#) [CONTACT](#) [ADVERTISING](#) [PRIVACY](#) [TERMS](#)



© 2005 - 2018 Another Man Publishing Ltd.