

THE WAY OF RAY

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The performance piece *The Way of Ray* explored the relationship between art, propaganda, and the cult of personality. Video and still image self-portraits conceive of a stereotypical “Artist”, referencing selected representations such as the author photo, political portraiture, and opening glamour shots found in television shows like *Beverly Hills 90210*. These images of “Ray the Poet” use the very important person, or VIP iconography of government propaganda—they are part demagogue and part corny, moving between absurdity and truth. The audience is left to decide which personae to disbelieve more, and becomes an active part in solidifying the fictional character of “Ray the Poet.” As part of the performance, collaborator Tetsuro Shigematsu documented the event on video. Like contemporary paparazzi who record celebrities’ day-to-day activities, Shigematsu both supplements and competes with the so-called primary performance. He intervenes with the audience’s experience of “Ray the Poet” and thus blurs conventions of documentary making and the archival process.

THE WAY OF RAY --><-- INVITING VAN.

1. Who is Van? What is a ritual?



2. We're hoping to be interrupted by the Real. We had one slick idea but, over the course of developing this project, we were interrupted by the Real of the collaborative process.



3. Andrea burned her journals so we can't include them here.



4. We want to invite the Real. We want to open the possibility that the Real can enter our picture. We want to pay attention to something we don't understand.



5. We don't want to be vain. We don't want to deceive ourselves. Are we refusing to think through any consequences? What is illegitimate about what we are doing? Are we antisocial?



6. Is this different? Disruptive? To whom?



7. Is this an engagement with modernity? Are we doing this because we need an active and participatory relationship with the cosmos?



8. Maybe together we can create some new ritual.