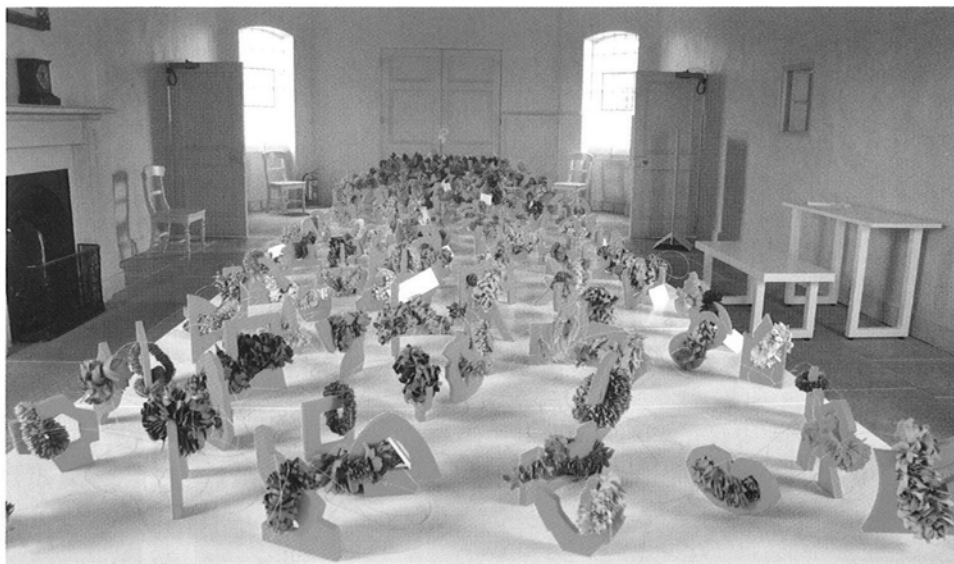


TERENCE HANNUM CHICAGO

Nine gray monochrome gouache drawings and an audio installation explore tragedy and transcendence in Terence Hannum's exhibition *Negative Altars* [PEREGRINEPROGRAM; July 16–31, 2010]. Influenced by both Christian iconography and heavy metal music, the work offers a complex fusion of rituals to propose an alternative empowerment of individual subjectivity.

Hannum's six works on paper are arranged as triptychs on either side of the gallery, referencing as a narrative device the sacred concept of the trinity that recurs in world religions. One of these triptychs is comprised of *Vigil*, 2010, *Watchers of Our Black Temple*, 2010, and *Hate Shrine*, 2010. The central image, *Watchers of Our Black Temple*, sets the location of these drawings within a chapel, with two elevated stained-glass windows depicted in the recesses of the composition's background. Architecturally designed for sonic resonance, a chapel's large hollow space reinforces the auditive dimension of a traditional Christian mass, ensuring that the sermon or choral performance fills the air and creates a sensorial experience for practitioners as they reflect on surrounding depictions of Christ, the Virgin Mary or mediating saints. In *Negative Altars*, however, vintage amplifiers—the fetishized technology of metal musicians—replace traditional icons. In the flanking works, *Vigil* and *Hate Shrine*, the expansive black unaltered ground of the paper substrate emphasizes the amplifying resonance of the location. Here, this compositional technique suggests that the artwork itself is a space made for sound, a site where metal occurs. To the left, in the foreground of *Vigil*, we see an individual from the back among a collection of lit candles. Two amps occupy the background. The figure's long tousled hair appears to be giving a headbanging nod or blown by the implied aural intensity of the space. To the right, *Hate Shrine* shows the figure provocatively replaced by a single candle.

Whereas the title *Negative Altars* refers to the binary distinctions of Christianity and Satanism, Hannum, who studied religion and philosophy, creates a sophisticated



SALLY SHEINMAN DERBYSHIRE, UK +

Sally Sheinman's touring installation *Let's Celebrate!* is the first product of a collaboration between two giant cultural bureaucracies in England: the Arts Council and the National Trust [Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire; May 1–June 15, 2010 / Staunton Harold Church, Leicestershire; June 17–July 13, 2010 / Longshaw Estate, Derbyshire; July 17–August 1, 2010 / Southwell Workhouse Nottinghamshire; August 4–September 5, 2010 / Tattershall Castle, Lincolnshire; September 28–October 20, 2010]. In essence, the Arts Council is siting contemporary art in historic properties owned by the National Trust. The press release couches the joint initiative in no nonsense, mutually-beneficial terms, stating that both entities "...believe that placing high-quality and innovative contemporary art within historic settings can inspire artists and audiences and encourage new ways of looking at the work and the world." So far, so earnest. Curatorial interventions can be risky enough without such premises—simply placing unrelated objects in unusual contexts does not always make for thrilling exhibitions.

Happily, Sally Sheinman, an American artist who lives and works in England, has pulled off a quiet triumph. Her work typically involves small-scale, labor-intensive installations that rely on the response of viewers for their "completion": an act of generosity and trust. Inspired by a range of cultural antecedents such as archaeological statuettes, ethnological sculpture, occult charms and international festivities, Sheinman typically produces a mass of small, decorative sculptures and displays them as a long-term, slowly-unfolding performance to which visitors are invited to contribute writings. These open-ended works are then "finished" when the exhibition closes.

One of a series of cultural commissions for the approaching 2012 Olympics, *Let's Celebrate!*'s stated aim is "the reflection of human excitement and the social rituals that occur leading up to and during celebratory events." I saw the work in three venues. In light of the vastly different effect of the installation in each context it feels almost irrelevant to assess whether it actually

hybrid of traditionally conflicting ritualistic messages in this exhibition. He deploys references to the culture of Christianity, by way of triptychs and stained-glass chapel windows, alongside the dark iconography of the metal subculture. In this, Hannum seems to reflect on traditional notions of spirituality and offer a possibility for transcendence through the alternate means of metal—a cultural realm often associated with paganistic and even Satanic beliefs.

Shrine, 2009, presents a double bass drum kit installed in a forest, referencing the iconography of occulture drawn from metal album covers, promotional photographs, and flyers. Its placement is counterintuitive, failing to meet the technical requirements of twentieth-century-metal's electronically-assisted sound level. Yet, culturally accepted as the natural birthplace of the type of ominous music the drum kit performs, the melancholy raises the kit's aura.

Negative Altars performs a dialogue between visual art and music, informed by Hannum's practice as an artist/musician. This counterpoise between hearing and vision is literally fused in the installation of the audio piece *Summoning*, 2010, and the gouache drawing *Censer*, 2010. Here, rather than using tape-reels, Hannum unwound the long analog magnetic tape to outline a pentagon on the gallery wall. In its center, *Censer* illustrates the incense-burning implement used in church rituals. The player translates the ribbon into sound as it pulls and amplifies the looped tape around its perimeter—anchored by long bolts sticking out from the wall. The original vocal drone recording, written and performed by Hannum, inflects the overall temporal experience of the exhibition as the subtle changes in the low pitch and rhythm create a vast sonic space. By shifting the works' perspective from first to third person, *Negative Altars* immerses us in the experience of an individual's aurally-inspired transformation, while simultaneously implying metal's potential for our own transcendence.

—Amelia Ishmael

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Terence Hannum, *Summoning*, 2010, magnetic tape, reel-to-reel player, carriage bolts, and gouache drawing, dimensions variable [courtesy of the artist and PEREGRINEPROGRAM; photo: Terence Hannum]; Sally Sheinman, view of *Let's Celebrate!* at Southwell Workhouse, Nottinghamshire, UK [courtesy of the artist; photo: Mitra Memarzia]