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Belief in the World Is Belief in the Unmaking of the World

> 40,000 years ago, the polarity of Earth switched, and North and South poles changed places. It brought the end of the Neanderthals and the fauna in Australia deeply changed. But it was also a moment of prolific cave paintings. What is the purpose of this art? Shamanic? A ritual we don't understand? A pre-historic selfie? We don't know why they made art in times of crisis. The individuals who enlisted to make those cave paintings enlisted to making art that will not be reduced to consciousness or cognition as we understand it. It was anima mundi. Something spirited, mysterious, ungraspable.
>
> —Bayo Akomolafe

Art still carries this great promise: to live inside us yet remain unknowable.

We live in despairing times, conservative times, breaking open to face more than we can bear: the dawning of the debiologization of collective intelligence; looking the heritage of colonialism in the eye; the erasure of indigenous ways, just when climate pressures could use these ancient knowledges; the crumbling of colonial and patriarchal structures, its beneficiaries lashing out in terror of the end.

The great confusion of our time is an obsession with materiality, consumption, and ownership, but art is not something you consume, rather something that becomes a part of you, and helps you transform. In that sense, art is immaterial, but lives in a material container. Art spills beyond objecthood, and changes you. A rupture makes us porous, and the contemporary disorientation can't prevent it. You can be by yourself when you encounter it, yet feel connected, and such relief to exist in relation! Art can make walls quiver, and perhaps come down; something streams in, from beyond, and we feel the glitch.

"I didn't understand the world after seeing the work," a friend said to me recently. This is a lot to ask of art, impossible, really, but we keep returning to it because of this. We cultivate the potential to live a wider life, in which imagination and art can change the world in an instant, at any moment.