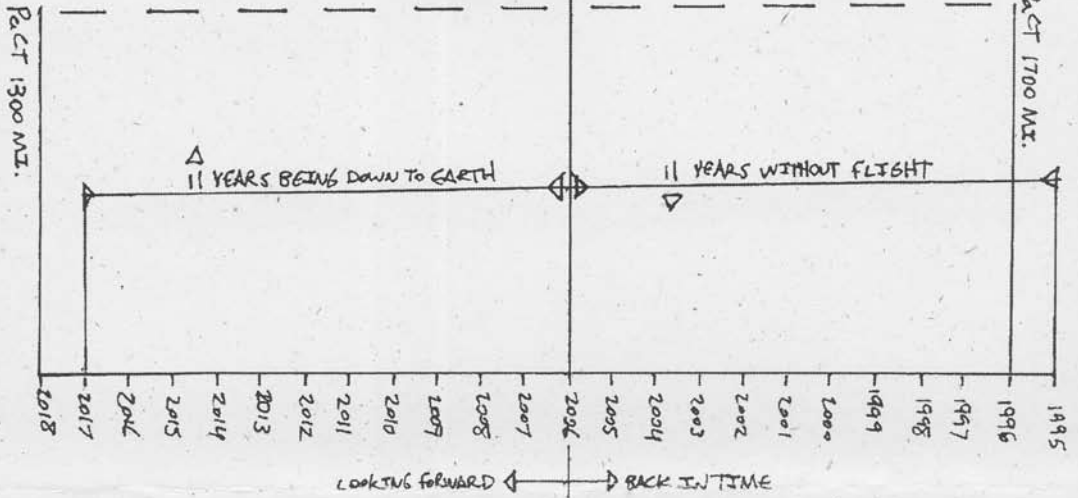




11/11/06 DATE OF
BIFURCATION



I WAS. NOW I IS



PETER MILES REGENOLD BERGMAN

Peter Miles Bergman: Cosmic Forces

Peter Miles Bergman is the president of the “Institute Of Sociometry”. The IS represents a world wide syndicate of special agents involved in the practice and promotion of guerrilla sociometry. Before you go ahead and read the following article and since the definition of textbook sociometry is very difficult to understand I’ll give you an example of what Mr. Bergman is up to with his “guerrilla sociometry” .

In 1998 for example the IS published a postcard-book called “Suggested Photo Spots”. The project by a group called “The Center for Land Use Interpretation” was inspired by Kodak’s “Picture Spots”, corporate sponsored signs found at popular tourist destinations around the world designed to help tourists recognize photographically noteworthy sights. In this tradition, the group placed their own “Suggested Photo Spots” signs outside of Zoos and Amusement Parks bringing attention to specific places all over North America. The signs invite the visitor to take a closer look at something common, making the ordinary seem unfamiliar, and perhaps posing unanswerable questions.

In 1999 Pete himself set out to befriend exclusively the owners of white VW Golf cabriolet convertibles by leaving a formal letter under the windshield wiper of the parked cars. The letter read in excerpts “White cabriolet convertibles, such as yours, never fail to catch my eye. Your car, undoubtedly, has a certain style ... As you own such a stylish car, you must be, through association, quite stylish too. Given my affinities, I would like to propose an open invitation to lunch ...”. After having left numerous of these letters around southern California and almost being beat up by Quarterback-boyfriends protecting their convertible driving Cheerleader girlfriends Pete finally got a call back from one of the owners - a gay guy called “Waegner”. Pete published a handmade book called “Hosted by my own petard” covering the full duration of the experiment.

This is the kind of thing Peter Bergman does. One could say that Pete is practicing conceptual street art performances - that’s probably what “Guerrilla Sociometry” is all about. But what’s up with deciding to not have your photo taken for 11 years after you’ve just ended 11 years of not flying anywhere? IS Agent Peter Bergman reports live from Chicago, Illinois.





Friday Night, 11.10.2007

In 1996 Dylan Kuhn and I walked 1,700 miles from the California/Mexico border to the California/Oregon border. We spent 90 days walking through and living in deserts, forests, mountains, snow, tiny villages and the occasional mid sized town. During our walk my intention was to wear, and subsequently destroy, the “only suit I would ever own”. Our intention was to walk 2,600 miles - all the way to Canada. The suit, which I had arranged to be mailed to me, was lost in the mail. It reappeared a month later when Dylan and I, completely exhausted, decided to stop walking at Oregon, 900 miles short of Canada. In 1997 I returned to the place we quit walking and buried the suit in an airtight canister. We plan to return in 2018, dig it up, and finish our journey - twice as old as we were for the first half. The walk had an effect on each of us that is creeping, subtle and profound.

I had a dream on our walk during which I was visited by a bird with a bolt of lightning on its chest. A year later, I stumbled upon a book describing the *Wakinyan*, or *Thunder Bird*, of the North American Sioux. In Lakota Sioux culture, if I were to return from my rite of passage to report that the *Thunder Bird* inhabited my dream, I would immediate

ly be designated a *Heyoka*. *Heyokas* were “sacred clowns”. They did everything backwards; rode their horses backwards, set up their sweat lodge the wrong way and were constantly engaged in symbolically meaningful mischief. The hair on my arms stood out as if electrified. My entire adult life I have engaged in contrary behavior as art. I set absurd limits on living that map onto and interact with the randomness of daily life in simultaneously illuminating and maddening ways. I decided right after our walk, that I didn’t want to break contact with the earth. I could look at a picture of the earth from space, put my thumb and forefinger an inch-and-a-half apart and say, “I walked this far”. I quit flying in airplanes. I became a “conscientious objector to the separation of my physical being to my earth bound soul.” To the Sioux being a *Heyoka*, even having one in your family, was considered an honor, a blessing, a trial and a curse. In Middle-American culture believing in dreams in the first place is backwards.

Dylan continued to structure his life around long journeys. In 1999 and 2000 he rode his bicycle 13,000 miles around the perimeter of the United States. In the Pacific Northwest, the beginning of his journey, he had a dream that he was high above the earth, flying and beginning to fall. After a long



dreamtime of hurling toward a vast landscape he was able to gain control of his decent and gingerly float to a soft landing. The next morning, the first outpost of civilization he passed was a little skydiving hangar. Because of cost, he didn't fulfill his dream.

Last night we left Colorado for Oregon to try to catch his dream and intertwine it with my vision. Our first objective was to visit my suit buried on top of a small mountain just south of Jackson Gap in the Siskiyou Mountains. I was going to have Dylan take my second-to-last picture as a mid-point marker of our 2,600 mile, 24 year journey. We drove into the night bypassing closed and iced-over sections of the freeway on even more iced-over sections of adjacent dirt roads. All day we raced across northern Nevada trying to stay ahead of the westward moving sun. With little more than an hour of daylight left, we began climbing into the Siskiyou Mountains. Just past Mt. Ashland, where the road turned to gravel, a green gate, impassable and locked tight blocked our pilgrimage.

On to our second mission. We decided to camp at Crater Lake, wake up at dawn, gawk at it and hussel the remaining 120 miles to Madras in time for our 10 a.m. appointment. As we began ascending into the Cascades rain began splattering the windshield. An hour later and just a few miles past the Crater

Lake turnout snow began sticking to the road. We turned around, returned to the highway and drove a couple of hours through a blizzard to the east side of the divide before pulling over for a snow entombed night's sleep in the car.

Saturday Afternoon 11.11.2007

We are headed east – back to Colorado. This morning we crept north on iced over roads stopping to check on cars stranded in the ditch. Last night's storm clung to the edge of the valley making threatening gestures. This day 11.11. was to be our day. Dylan would tick off the one thing he regretted not doing on his bike trip and I would mark the transition of a 22 year process. I planned to end my 11 year moratorium on flying and begin 11 years of not letting anyone take my picture. The entire 22 year process would be documented with a single photo: me – about to get on an airplane.

We arrived at *Central Oregon Skydiving* to anxious tapping feet, apologetic smiles and upturned hands. There would be no flights - impending storm.

If I'm truly trying to learn from the seemingly random events that affect my experiments in creative living I must acknowledge the symbolic relevance of this trip. The lesson I learned from our walk is that failure is a meaningful end to life's trials. Crossing the threshold of your limitations is the rite of passage. Dylan put it well in 1996 and I'll quote him again in the context of this 11.11: "*It's as if we're not going to tell this trip what it means to us.*" I was seeking a way to get my life out of my art. No more self portraits. No more introspection. No more "everybody look at ME!" Deciding when, where and how I was going to change was layering even more limitations on living. I may have been exploring a path to normality but was continuing to walk backwards.

We signed an oath in 1996 that we would return in 24 years to complete our walk. Now, at the half-way point of this interim, I'm feeling compelled to sign a second personal oath for the next 11 years.

11:11 11 years without flight : 11 years down to earth

From 2006 to 2017 I, Peter Miles Regenold Bergman, will cease to be an art-medium. I will not live under the confines of conceptual limitations. I will BE – uncritical and unselfconscious. I will let anyone take my picture but will not put a frame around the image, call it art, or show it to you. I was – now I is.

