

CuriousJosh: Get some water, do I have like two seconds?

Halcyon: We just started, we're live.

CuriousJosh: Then I'm using water I have.

Halcyon: Welcome I am Halcyon and I'm here with Curious Josh and we ... well let me just bring you to now real quick. So this has been an exciting week for the Burning Man community. There has been a ... honestly a very exciting conversation about decommodification and about a recent Vogue fashion show or a Vogue photo gallery for a runway show by Manish Arora and because in addition to his 25, 26 pieces that were just genius, gorgeous Burning Man influence art pieces, there was a number that had some elements to them that were triggering.

Whether they be imagery from the temple or iconography from Burning Man art pieces and so there's been a very interesting and heated and passionate conversation in the community over the last 24, 48 hours about Decommodification and what he did right, what he did wrong, who should have their head on a pike? Who should be castrated? These types of things. And so a person who has given a lot of thought the commodification of Burning Man and the aspects of this line we're treading because honestly, I am someone who makes my living off the things that I have ... that Burning Man has made me into.

So I struggle with how do I market myself, how do I find the people that want to find me while honoring these principles and honoring these ideas while being ... also honoring the very mission of The Burning Man project, which is getting this culture into the world? So we're in a very interesting place where it can be manipulated, it can also be amplified. I think there's not a lot of people who are accusing me of manipulating and taking advantage of the community but someone doing the exact same thing as me in a different situation could be. So it's a worthy conversation, I think we should all be listening and trying to find our way, welcome Josh.

CuriousJosh: What an intro, welcome Halcyon.

Halcyon: So we were on the phone minutes ago and you brought up an amazing article that Larry Harvey wrote, Decommodification Of A Cup of Coffee, something like that.

CuriousJosh: Commerce and Community: Distilling Philosophy From A Cup Of Coffee. It was a blog post that he wrote which is really interesting coming up now. And by the way, I loved your intro because like you, I wasn't a photographer until I fell in love with The Burning Man community and literally started my photography blog because I wanted to show the amazing things that everyone was doing and even save it for them. So I wasn't making any money, nothing and now, how many years later is it since I started that curiousjosh.com? It's 15 years and I'm a

professional photographer and it's also, I fall into that same category of where is that line? What happens when ... did you cross it? When do you cross it? What is crossing it versus what is being an artist?

Halcyon: And is crossing it actually in service of the mission?

CuriousJosh: Well, it's one the most interesting things is that I think you and I both started going to Burning Man before the 10 principles were enacted or published. What's interesting is that in that time we've now had ... it's been going on so long, we've now had an entire generation raised on Burning Man principles who have gotten inspiration from it and are now forming lives and careers out of it in some ways but there's this struggle I see, even within people who are trying to harm the mission of being inspired by it but having to separate themselves from it at the same time. It's not the same situation as when the 10 principles first came in.

Halcyon: When we were on the phone, you brought that up and that's when I'm like, "Hey, let's do a Facebook Live." Because to people that don't know, the 10 principles were not a part of Burning Man from its origin. What happened was, when the first regional happened, Flipside in Austin, they were trying to promote it and tell people about it. And they said, "What the fuck do we say about this thing?" And so they back to the org and said, "How do we explain what we're doing?" So Larry Harvey went down to ... on kind of like a retreat and he came back with these nine principles and they were like, "Dude, nine? What the fuck?"

And so he went back for a couple hours and he came back with the 10th principle, which was immediacy. But the way that the 10 principles came to be was there were not dictates about how you need to be, they were descriptions of how the community was already acting. So the 10 principles was Larry Harvey's analysis of this is what makes our community special, is because these are the things that they're already doing. So gifting, Decommodification, radical self-reliance, these were the things that defined the culture and then we just put a name to them as opposed to them being from up on top and being given to us.

But what Josh brought up is that at the time that these came out, the world was different, their relationship to Burning Man was different and this whole concept of people who are being inspired by Burning Man and then trying to create careers and businesses and things influenced by that to bring this mission into the world, that did not exist. I think that's what ... yeah.

CuriousJosh: That's right and it's a weird line between what is being inspired or what is getting credit for your work as an artist as opposed to commodifying the experience. You brought up that post by Larry Harvey and now possibly is a good time to bring it up again, but it's called Commerce and Community: Distilling Philosophy From A Cup Of Coffee and I think that anyone who is

interested in this topic should read that and read that post because he very specifically said that they didn't call it decommerce for a reason. They called it Decommodification and to sum up is kind of ... maybe should I read a sentence or two from it?

Halcyon: Yeah, please do.

CuriousJosh: Sure, let's see.

Halcyon: The words of Larry Harvey.

CuriousJosh: The words of Larry Harvey and he's referring to when they're talking about how some people are saying that the fact that you sell coffee in the standard camp is against Decommodification. And he says, "My reply is that we've never espoused a non-commercial ideology. To be against commerce is to oppose the very existence of civilized life. Even hunter-gatherers engage in trade in order to survive. When most people say that any thing or act is too commercial or has been commercialized, very few of them mean to say that the practice of commerce is necessarily bad. Instead, they are expressing the feeling that something essential — something that should never be bought and sold — has been commodified. This is why we have always been careful to use the words commodify and decommodify."

Halcyon: And I think that's ... one of the things that I think is significant for me about that conversation is the recognition that we cannot decommerce The Burning Man experience. People will often be like, "How do you get to Burning Man without buying stuff?" It's impossible, you going to build your car? You going to like mine the steel to build your car to get ... No, there's this massive amount of commercial interactions and transactions that is mandatory for Burning Man to work. But I think part of the Decommodification principle is that within the event space, we create an environment where we do not have commodification. We do honor this place where-

CuriousJosh: Or which we strive to.

Halcyon: We strive to.

CuriousJosh: We strive to.

Halcyon: And the other part of it is I think, the part that brings us to the topic that's getting everyone riled up, is whether it's on the playa or off the playa, we do not take things from the playa and turn them into commodities. So when we have these articles of clothing that take a landscape of Burning Man it turns it into a product that could potentially be mass produced and sold, that feels like the definition of commodifying Burning Man.

CuriousJosh: You know, it's funny, when you say we don't take things from the playa and turn them into a commodity. I mean on some level you're right, but I-

Halcyon: You know what? As I said it I realized I can think of examples where that's not true.

CuriousJosh: Right, like for example, there's art projects, which have been on the playa and then they're sold. But there's this line in a lot of ways. Oh and Danielle Doxie Kaltz, thank you for putting that comment in that is linked to the article, so everyone could see it if they want. There's almost this line between commodifying the experience and having something like your art that you are doing out there, you're doing for yourself, you're making the art piece, you're enjoying it. Then later, the art piece is sold and it's kind of like this thin ... like that kind of thin sheet between the two but it's an important distinction I think. I think it's right, I think it's an important-

Halcyon: Honestly, I think about it now, my first year at Burning Man was '98, which was your first year. Anybody who has been there longer than '98 give us a comment because we will give you mad props. But I remember being brought out into the open playa by the person who invited me to the event, Derek Powazek, mad respect and I see these sculptures and I'm like, "What the fuck? Who paid these people to bring this stuff? Did our ticket price go to this?"

And he was like, "No, no, they've been working year round and raising money so that they could build these things, so they could blow your mind." As he said that, it blew my mind and it's a little different nowadays because people do build art with the intention of creating a commodity that could be sold in the future. And so while I do want artists to be sold, it is a dilution of the true incredible magic of things created simply for the purpose of gifting. Do you agree? You don't have to, you don't have to.

CuriousJosh: That sentence, well I think ... no, no, there's some point in that, there's some point in people having created these huge pieces of art, if they're specifically doing it for the commercial aspect of it. But I would hope that the org, in choosing their artists ... because you can have the same effect and the same result and have one person who is thinking of the experience as a commodity and another person who is thinking of the experience as, "Oh my God, I love this, I'm creative and inspired creating this art." And then they can also sell their art later. I think one of the things ...

Halcyon: What I think now is the case is because we have a cultural reach, is that we have the ability to blow the minds of people on playa and then the ability to take it into the world and blow many, many more minds. When I think about the vision of the Space Whale touring the world. I remember when they were building it and I got to visit the generator and their idea was, they wanted to erect it at Burning Man ... I didn't mean to say the word erect. And then bring it all over

the world and that is not a dilution of the magic of Burning Man, that is an amplification of the magic of Burning Man.

CuriousJosh: It's funny because in that post, Larry himself talks about how commerce is actually important for people to continue to be able to do these things, I believe. I have to reread it again but, which is ... it's that fine line between an artist participating at Burning Man and also making a career as an artist while getting credited for their work, but credited for the work and supporting their work outside of Burning Man but not necessarily commodifying the experience.

Halcyon: I was so anti-money commerce for my 20s and then I had a mentor who was like, smacked me up the side of the head and was like, "Look dude, the only way that the system that we live in knows how to communicate, is through money." We buy things and then the system knows that we want more of that. So as artists get paid, as we put money into sculptures, as we put money into public sculptures, this is the way that we communicate to this entire system that we want more of it. So I am against the demonization of money and commerce but to pull it back, I also think it's important to protect this experiment within the Black Rock City borders and within any 10 principle event, that within that event, you keep this sacred, magical space, so that gifting can be pure.

CuriousJosh: And even the experience can be pure. I had an interesting experience this time around, where I went ... I thought someone had a really cool outfit and I was like, "Oh my God, I'd love to capture a photo of your outfit. Can we do this?" And it was weird because she kind of like put me off like, "Hold on, I got to get this photo." And she gave, at the same time she gave her cellphone to someone who was with her and was like ... to me was like, "Okay, you can shoot me the same time she's shooting me." And it was a weird experience, I was like, "No, you know what? I'm good, enjoy."

A lot of what I like to do is kind of like save cool memories for people when I think that they're looking awesome or doing something special or something like that. I recognized a lot of what you said in saying that we like to show people stuff out there to kind of blow their minds and let people know that there can be these other ways of existing. But what was interesting about it was later, my girlfriend realized that she was Instagram model who had a follow of about 75,000 people and she was getting that shot to get shots of that specific outfit for sharing. What I noticed was the way that it affected our interaction on playa and-

Halcyon: Right, there's an agenda, there's an angle, there's ... that's the whole purpose of gifting is that when someone approaches you, they do not have an agenda, they do not have an angle for that interaction, it's simply to have a ... I want to lift up your experience, I want to meet you, I want to connect with you. But when you have a commodification opportunity, then that interaction gets corrupted.

CuriousJosh: Right, but one of the things that I think is kind of important is to separate out that kind of commodification of the experience as opposed to people who have grown up with the experience or developed or even built a career out of their art and do their best to not commodify the experience there but to enjoy it. But still are influenced and excited about their art and do their art the rest of the year, that might be referential to Burning Man, which isn't necessarily commodification.

Halcyon: Okay, I'm going to take one pause and say, if you're watching, and you think other people should be listening, share this with people.

CuriousJosh: Oh, should I share that to my profile?

Halcyon: The other thing I was going to say is that one of the things I've been critical of in the past of video creators, that make videos about Burning Man and they will, often because they are trained in a world where music video and highlights and so they make these music video type stuff that looks like hot models and beautiful things and that's part of the event. But what is rarely included in these videos is an element of education or acculturation information about our principles and about our culture.

It's just this visual of what the culture creates. Now the culture creates magic, but if you don't understand the culture, if you don't understand the 10 principles, then you just buy a ticket and come because you want to go to the rave. And so I've been very critical of video makers who do not address the 10 principles in their videos and I kind of feel like the same criticism could be made towards a fashion designer or potentially even, not finger pointing, but a photographer.

CuriousJosh: I was waiting for you to say that word. I was sitting and I go, "He's going to say it, I know he's going to say it."

Halcyon: To share the culture, is to be part of the enculturation process for the world.

CuriousJosh: Well and another part of that, that's really hard, is that by definition one of the things I've been very conscious of was I've covered for papers, nationwide papers and even just for myself, is that your experience of Burning Man does not have to be everyone else's experience of Burning Man. Sometimes how you define your experience can be different than how someone else defines their experience.

Halcyon: How do you describe your ... When people ask you what Burning Man is, what do you say?

CuriousJosh: Oh, a lot of the time it's along the lines of, it's what you bring with you.

Halcyon: I tell people it's a city because they're like, "Oh, is that like that festival?" I'm like, "No, no, no, it's a city and it has an infinite amount of stuff ... a near infinite of stuff of whatever you're into." If you want to do yoga, you can yoga all day, every day. You want to listen to lectures about science, you can do that all day, every day. You want to check out art, you can do that all day, every day. If you want to rave and melt your face, you can do that all day, every day. So it is really an opportunity to express yourself and it's like the elephant and the blind man who are rubbing different parts, it's whatever you want.

CuriousJosh: Yes, well it's funny you say that because I often describe it ... okay ... thank you for clicking the brain going. I often describe it ... in a lot ways people talk about they manifest something at Burning Man. I use this as an example because I often talk about the chaos theory of Burning Man, where literally everything is going on at the same time. There's so many random things, so what you tune into becomes your experience. So you know, I find a lot of people say, "Oh I manifested this." Well, that guy was making that lemonade to hand it out already and he didn't necessarily know that, that would tune into your childhood, where you have been dying for people to give you lemonade at some point. But because that's you, you tune into that and it validates your experience and you find out more about who you are. When I sum that up, I ... it's what you bring with you. I kind of meant in a lot ways it's what you find and relate to out there is a reflection of who you are and in a lot ways, that's how I found out more about myself. Kind of looking at you and your outfit there, I don't know if you've had a similar experience.

Halcyon: I want to just read a comment real quick and then we'll make sure that we ... know that we are listening, if you guys want to add comments or questions, we'll try to address them. Noxy says-

CuriousJosh: While we're doing it, if I click the see comments, will I disappear?

Halcyon: The Renaissance had the Medici family, we need art supports, we need money to make this. This is why acculturation never ends, folks need to understand all the principles, not just the easier ones and it is hard to ensure that folks most of us will never talk to, get those conversations. I said for a few years now, that it really helps if folks who are, say the one percenters on playa, to get a good image, come across folks who really do understand the principles and learn about them and hopefully they get it and they take it back to their friends and teach them.

Folks we'll never be able to interact with, that is micro dosing to me. But also, that is a lot of ... it's a lot to ask of those folks, taking it back to people we cannot reach pre-veteran. Here's where each one teach one really comes into play and each of us has continually promoted acculturation in our communities. Host more newbie orientations, host and discuss one principle at a time on social media. We will not teach everyone but we can reach a lot of folks with the power on this list, nice.

Agreed, we are all tasked with the acculturation responsibility and I too, I have zero problem with a system that allows the uber wealthy to experience Burning Man. As long as it is not in the Safari style experience, where they fly in, look at us and then fly out. If you're truly going to be a participant, there's the possibility that your brain is going to crack open, feel gifting, get the magic and understand what it is to be a human [crosstalk 00:24:29]

CuriousJosh: I'm so glad you're bringing this up because it always struck me as funny that you hear about companies that pay for these huge retreats, where it's team building exercises. But then the same people will kind of come in and try to weekend Burning Man or do it in their RV, when you get so much out of having to build your camp. Realizing that you can build your camp, I would describe myself before I came to Burning Man as metro.

Halcyon: Metro?

CuriousJosh: Metro, I was definitely metro.

Halcyon: You do have nicely trimmed brows.

CuriousJosh: Actually that's thanks to Bree, she makes sure. But I'd be the last person to want to go camping or anything like that and just the act of going through Burning Man and learning the self building, learning the exercise where you go through and realize you can build a camp. You can set up things like gray water stations or what you need. It's such a growth experience that in a way, you're almost cheating yourself by not participating.

Halcyon: Boom, I agree with that, I think that ... I get that making it a convenience is necessary to get some people who are used to a life of convenience, that's what's needed to get them here. But honestly, it's like [crosstalk 00:25:51] I feel like I say like, "Cool, so you paid \$100,000 and for that you get this shitty cheese burger." But if you would make your own way, you would get a gourmet meal. The experience of actually figuring the shit out ... my best year, the year that changed my life more than any other, that made me a better person than any other year, was the year that I had the biggest struggles, that my camp fucking was destroyed by wind, that I fucking cried the most.

And if I had the money to avoid that, I would never have got that experience. And so, in our camp it's like, I tell people you will be participating, not because we need your labor but because trust me, you'll thank me, if you want your life to be changed, if you want a truly transformational experience and not a Coachella, this is awesome, look at me and my cool Instagram blah, blah, you got to fucking get in there and have some scars and some cheers and some shit.

CuriousJosh: So much so man, it's really funny, I shoot a lot of festivals, and I also shoot a lot of weddings these days and people ask me like, "Can you handle when things go wrong?" I'm like, "You know when you've already been shooting, when your

tent is blowing over in the middle of ... crazy dust storms, wondering where your shelter is and keeping things going anyway, you're good." It's like you learn from being through these absolute disasters that you're going to get out of those absolute disasters okay and the next time you hit a disaster you've learned, okay, I can live through this.

Halcyon: So let me go to a couple of comments. One, heather saying, "Hey, what's wrong with an RV?" And I would say there's nothing wrong with an RV, however, when I started going to Burning Man, I'm not sure this is your experience Josh, but in '98, having an RV was like pretty fucking amazing. It was not expected, there was not a lot of people who were like plusing it in their RVs. I just expected that you were in a tent, just like that's the way you did it and now, when I hear people talk about Burning Man, who've never been, they're like, "Oh yeah, I'm thinking about going, I just got to figure out which RV I'm going to rent."

I'm like, "When did that become mandatory." Now as someone who has had an RV for a few years and is not going back to a tent any time soon, there's nothing wrong with an RV. All that being said, my RV is from 1983 and it smells like rat piss and mold, so I'm not like Mr Plush. In fact, it's ... my partner said, "You realize that the point of an RV is that it's better than a tent, right?" Okay, so don't think of it like, I wanted to go back to ...

CuriousJosh: I just got to say, my first year we rolled in, my friends ... I was out here working in California on a gig from New York for a big 3D software company and my friend said, "Hey, you want to go to a party in the desert?" That was my intro. We showed up with sleeping bags, no tents. No, we didn't even set up but we were so lucky. Just so know how lucky we got, it was '98, so it was like, the weather perfect, you were in shorts all night. The next time I came back, in 2003 because I took a break after that, it was so bad that ... I had told my friends, "No, you don't need jackets." Luckily one of them took an extra jacket for me but yeah.

Halcyon: Yeah, so Brian has posted, making some comments like some links to the Manish runway show and so I want to kind of bring it back that and talk a little bit about that. So 24 hours ago, something like that, I got online on Facebook Live, and I started kind of losing my shit about this Manish gallery show. There's 25 of the 30 pieces or so are very beautiful Burning Man inspired outfits. They use goggles and fur and boots, and you know, it's like ... it looks like burners but amplified a little bit. If any of those outfits showed on Burning Man you'd be like, "You fucking look badass, it's awesome."

CuriousJosh: A little bit? Amplified a little bit?

Halcyon: There was some pretty badass shit. I mean he's a badass designer. He's fucking amazing, in fact, if it wasn't for the other five outfits, I would be like ... this is would be a non-issue. However, there's five outfits or so, I'm not good at math, that cross the line into this place that has caused all these conversations and

heated things. Those include two things. One is he made a print of the playa, including all these known art pieces like Embrace, and The Love Words, and The Hug Deli-

CuriousJosh: It was just ... it was being illustrated.

Halcyon: It was illustrated, correct, which I'm wondering if that was ... it made me think, I had a painter friend of mine that I commissioned to do a painting of The Burning Man for me, can I make t-shirts now, if it's a painting of Burning Man? Is that fair game? So he did this print of Burning Man and he used that print on pants and on a dress and now I know that he reached out to some artists. He reached out to the guy who did Exhibition Bank and the big Facebook ... Dadara, he did the Facebook like thumb, and he said, "Hey, I want to use some of your work on my pieces." And he said, "No." So I don't know if he reached out to all the other pieces, and they said yes. I have no idea, but either way-

CuriousJosh: Even if they did, this is where we cross that line about what is commodification?

Halcyon: Exactly.

CuriousJosh: One of the things that you didn't bring up, I know the next one you're bringing up, but also another component of these that was really big for me. I'm not going to bring it up yet, I'm going to let you bring it up. But the other component that was really big for me, were the reproduction of the art cars as handbags.

Halcyon: Yes, was that consensual? Was that okay?

CuriousJosh: One of the biggest examples that I use when talking about the difference between you know and someone who's grown up as an artist and is either posting photos from The Burn as a photographer or someone who is making Burning Man inspired pieces, maybe they're tagging them but not using photos from The Burn in their stuff. One of the big examples I use is I talk about the artist, if an artist makes an art piece that is displayed at Burning Man and is later sold, there's a separation there.

They're not actually using ... they're not actually selling an image of the art piece of Burning Man and one thing I bring up is they're not making small replicas, taking a photo of the art at Burning Man on the website and linking to say, "Hey, buy my replica of this art piece that you just saw for \$100." Because that would be a commodification of Burning Man, making little miniature versions of this piece from the Burning Man experience. Like, hey Burning Man merchandise and for me, those handbags are literally almost one of the exact things that I use as an example to say, "Don't do this, this would be commodification."

Halcyon: I want to just ... you know what? Let me see if I can put it on the screen. Here we go, Heather is saying, "The purses pissed me off and I am someone who loves purses."

CuriousJosh: Right, yeah, that was like my first jaw dropping moment, when I saw those and I was like, "That's a reproduction of a Burning Man art car."

Halcyon: So hearing the issues involving, around this whole experience. One is cultural appropriation, some people said ... and to me, that's a non-issue. Burning Man itself is a place of culture appropriation, sure. We get pissed off and we yell at people for having feather headdresses but all of our temples-

CuriousJosh: Well, we argue on some of that. We held them for Indian headdresses.

Halcyon: Exactly.

CuriousJosh: Which is different than feather use, which has been in a number of other places as well but yeah.

Halcyon: I mean, for the most part, we are a place where appropriation is acceptable. All of our temples appropriate some aspect of another culture. In fact, if his work, his intention ... I would love to talk to him, was to put the eye on elite, wealthy, privileged white people and say, "How dare you think it's okay to appropriate our work but we can't appropriate yours." Bravo and genius, so I don't think appropriation is a legitimate issue. I think that if you create a culture, whether it be punk or rock and roll or rap or Burning Man, the fashion industry is going to appropriate it.

Meaning, take those ideas and bring them into the fashion world and I think he's done that beautifully and I applaud him, I have zero criticism of that whatsoever. Another issue is attribution, he used all of these pieces of art in his work that ... did the artist put their approval into that? At this point, I don't know, I've reached out to a couple of artists and I have not heard back. And I've heard from the artist like Dadara, who said, "I did not give approval." And his art is not in there, so maybe he did get approval and it's all good. Another issue-

CuriousJosh: Saw a post that someone in a photo had said no but they were used but I have to double check that to be honest. I don't want to start a rumor mill flying but it would be good to double check on those.

Halcyon: Another issue is commodification, having a skirt that is for sale, that has a drawing of the playa on it, that is, I think the most literal example of a commodification as you can have. Here's Burning Man and we're going to turn it into a product and then we're going to sell it. That feels, to me, like a pretty black and white example of commodification of Burning Man culture.

CuriousJosh: It is and also, it's really important to, at this point that we ... one of the reasons why this was so important ... why I first called you before I even ... thank you for inviting me on this, this is really fun.

Halcyon: Welcome.

CuriousJosh: Hey, but one of the reasons I called you was relating to Larry Harvey's post about making sure that we're going after commodification at Burning Man without making sure that we're going ... without us going after commerce related to Burning Man. It's interesting, it recently came across that Burning Man was having their legal team email designers, not who used Burning Man imagery and not who used Burning Man images to sell their product but designers who tagged something as being Burning Man inspired. Yeah, just for using the Burning Man tag, whether or not the actual image was from Burning Man or not.

And it's interesting because in a lot ways that begs the question, is commerce around Burning Man okay? Larry Harvey is saying commerce around Burning Man is okay and we now have a generation of people who are ... I'm sorry, some of them are definitely artists, even Manish, I could really respect his art. The problem that I don't like is the commodification, actually taking the things like ... I'm not upset that he has Burning Man inspired goggles in there. I wouldn't even be upset that he was saying I got inspired by Burning Man-

Halcyon: Me too.

CuriousJosh: But it's taking the pieces of the experience, like those-

Halcyon: It's the Hug Deli fanny pack.

CuriousJosh: Dude, with the logo.

Halcyon: What? I mean, I actually put a note. I sent a message to Mikey, he has not gotten back to me, so at this point we don't know if Mikey has approved that but ...

CuriousJosh: Right, right, but it's, like that's-

Halcyon: But even if he did.

CuriousJosh: Someone just [crosstalk 00:39:21] "No, he did not get approval for art of my friends." Judy, if she can comment maybe like which pieces in general she's talking about, that would be really-

Halcyon: That would be interesting because I've heard that the masks that he showed, that were from a famous Burning Man wedding, that those were used with permission, and I heard that the handbags were used by permission as well.

CuriousJosh: Well and also, this is a really important point, we're not talking about him displaying art. Like for instance that, the PEEPS right. For me, I'm not even upset about him displaying Burning Man art, that's sharing the art. And the art of Burning Man, that piece of art is not Burning Man, that's their mask, and it's art, and it's great. But if he was making reproductions of that mask and miniaturizing them and putting them into sale, that's commodification, that's the line because ... and the same thing with the goggles.

Like great, those are a really cool pair of goggles, if he was ... well even if he was reproducing those goggles, that's not Burning Man, that's the goggles, but those are designers, right. They've got their own ... right, thank you. Those are designers that have their own work. But it's the reproductions of things that are specifically Burning Man, like the picture of Embrace on fire drawn on the print. Embrace only was made for Burning man, it only burned at Burning Man and then it was gone. That is clearly Burning Man that is being drawn as part of that print.

Halcyon: So a number of people are asking about the one piece that I've been holding off till last and so, there's a piece in the show that looks like a lamp lighter robe and in the white space of what would normally be a lamp lighter robe, it is filled with scrawlings that appear to be either copies or mimickings of temple scrawls, of homages to people passed or words of wisdom or things like that, things that are left in the temple.

And I'm in the same boat of like it was really hard for me to see that and say, "Eh, what's the big deal?" If you're someone who is a burner for six years, as this guy says he is, I don't see how you take the temple, turn it into a cloak and not think that people who scrawl on a temple with the most intense grief of their life are not going to think that, that is a crass ... I don't know.

CuriousJosh: Yeah, yeah, I heard someone say too that in a way they were reminiscent, the design was reminiscent of the lamp lighter robes.

Halcyon: Yeah, exactly, yeah, I think ... it looked like a lamp lighter robe with temple scrawlings in the white space.

CuriousJosh: And flames on the bottom.

Halcyon: Yeah, it looks-

CuriousJosh: It's like a fashion statement of ... yeah-

Halcyon: And both of those things are in the super high echelons of our most sacred traditions. So now, granted, if you want to take those things and make a political or social commentary about those things, you have that right. But if you think you're a member of our community and then you can use those things and not think that it's taken as offensive, I don't ... it's kind of like if you're a Christian ... I

remember years ago there was an art grant for an art, who was called like, Christ In Piss and it was a crucifix in a jar of urine. Do you remember this? And that's a legitimate artistic expression, but it's also offensive to Christians. So if you're going to take Burning Man stuff at the temple and put it on a cloak, it's a legitimate artistic expression but it's fucking offensive.

CuriousJosh: You just brought up one thing though man, Burning Man is now the cacophony society, right. If it can't handle criticism and lampooning of itself, that's actually ... its roots are founded on that but this doesn't feel like a criticism or statement as much as it feels like an appropriation for fashion, for sale. It's called his ready to wear collection.

If someone really thought that the temple was becoming commercialized and made an art piece of the temple in a commercial form, not intending to reproduce it, showing some form of that. Like showing the comparison between some of our most sacred traditions and possible commercialization aspects. That would be an intelligent, it would be something that would be almost protected by the very spirit of The Burn.

Halcyon: Agreed.

CuriousJosh: But difference ... thanks man, I appreciate that. The difference is doing it ... making the temple experience for sale as an outfit, like, "Hey, look at this horrible pain, don't you want to look cool in this?"

Halcyon: I mean, I had some comments that people sent me today that I thought was ... like if this was a commentary on white privilege, and the acculturation theft that we have been doing towards iconography from other religious experiences, I can respect that. In fact, I talked to a number of people who said, "Wow, this helped me to look at the way that I am not respecting iconography from say, Buddhism or Hinduism or Christianity."

And so ... and if that was his intent, I totally respect that. But that would be made as someone who is trying to criticize our culture, and I think his intention was as an homage, to which I say, which of your friends gave you the green light on that? It seems like you offended a lot more people than you meant to, unless you meant to offend them, in which case, that is very Burning Man and that's your right.

CuriousJosh: You mean, if only the entire fashion show was performance art and meant to piss us off?

Halcyon: Yeah, I mean if that's the case then you succeeded, but I don't ... it seems like a strange choice considering everything else I know about the guy.

CuriousJosh: Yeah, I hear you on that one, you look like you're looking to your left, do you want to read a few more comments there?

Halcyon: There's a lot going on in the comments, so-

CuriousJosh: And then there's [crosstalk 00:46:46] one thing that really also brought this you, that I wanted to talk about, but hit the comments first.

Halcyon: Kayden says, "He's taken years of our community and splashed it over his fashion to enrich himself, we ask for donations to build and we aren't wealthy. If we brought something that the world has been taken by, he is stealing our gift for gain, people who take and take is not okay. We can't always give until we are no longer more and when people write something personal, don't steal it. Not including the very personal flow of writing, he stole even the signature of the personal writ."

What's a bummer is that outside of these five pieces, the guy is a badass artist. I looked through his things in the past, I looked at the rest of his collection. He is so rad, he's ... I don't know anything about fashion but I'll say he's one of my favorite designers [crosstalk 00:47:49] they're like wait, did you not ask any other burners that maybe this was ... yeah.

CuriousJosh: That the horrible things that we share and are meant to be burned and let go of, that were being preserved for all eternity.

Halcyon: I mean a part of it is because it's an interesting thing because for so many of us who have not felt connection to traditions in our life and not felt connections to our religious traditions and not felt connections to our churches and the temple becomes this place that for the first time, we feel like something sacred. And maybe it's a good experience for us to realize what say, a Christian feels like when they see a less respectful demonstration of something Christian or what ... maybe that's a good exercise for us but-

CuriousJosh: Or even what Native Americans feel like when they see a tribal headdress, specifically a tribal headdress being worn.

Halcyon: Exactly, maybe this is a really good opportunity for us to check in and say, "Oh, all that outrage that we just felt ..." And we just fucking made up this culture. There's fucking generations and generations of legitimate culture that are being appropriated and abused all the time. Maybe this is our-

CuriousJosh: Is it not legitimate? Is it not legitimate after 20 years or more?

Halcyon: To me, there's nothing more legitimate. But I will say that if I'm going to grant my culture that legitimacy, I have to respectfully say that someone who has generations of culture in another direction, that gets a little bit more weight and maybe this whole experience is an opportunity for us to be like, "Okay, feel that and then think of it, as you are hearing other people of color, of different voices that are frustrated." I wish that was his intention, if it was, that's why I want to talk to the guy. I'm like, if that's his intention, this is a brilliant piece.

CuriousJosh: Well, this also really brings up, in a way what you're talking about because if it's a legitimate criticism in the way it respects the culture enough to pick it apart.

Halcyon: Yeah.

CuriousJosh: If it's just taking something that looks really cool and reselling it, then it is going against the very principles of the things that he is reselling, which is not respecting the principles or not, which is also the same reason why personally, I don't have a problem with people using feathers in wear but-

Halcyon: Me neither.

CuriousJosh: But for the ones that are just ... that go out there blindly wearing an Indian War Bonnet for example, that's so culturally insensitive that, that's ... it's not great. And that kind of distinction is kind of I think what you're talking about too.

Halcyon: So let me take a moment to address the two ways that feathers are wrong. One, Indian War Bonnets and that's because they have a meaning to people in a culture outside of Burning Man. The other feathers that's wrong are cheap, super cheap boas that shed MOOP. A feather in and of itself, a part of a costume is not inherently an evil thing. Let's not mistake the finger for the moon people. We're trying to ... Okay, anyway-

CuriousJosh: Wait, that's not a small thing. One of the real reasons that, that's great that you're bringing this up is I always hope as burners that we be above, wherever we can be above mob mentality and witch hunts. And it's really interesting to me that this has become such a hot button issue the year after Larry Harvey passed. We're all upset, there's a lot of people who are ... it's very unnerving to say the least and as we kind of like ... you know, I've never done this with you before and one of the reasons why I was so excited to do it is because I think it's so important right now to really think about the distinctions and especially point back to that piece of Larry about commodification versus commerce, so that we don't go off the rail in the name of trying to correct something and really think about what the intent is here and hit it with a level head, but don't ignore it.

Halcyon: Right and one thing that ... so I took a five day course on the history of Burning Man earlier this year and one of the things that we studied is that the principles are designed to be kind of antagonistic. They intentionally require you to do some thought and to think about things and you can't be 100% radically inclusive and 100% radically self expressive. At some point those things require you to do some inquiry and some conversations and there's a bunch of things in the principles that require this to be an ongoing dialogue and I fucking love that. One thing I wanted ... so Doxy said, how as a community can we turn this around-

CuriousJosh: By the way [crosstalk 00:53:34] could you put another ... do that thing again with the quote because I think that we've, for the past 20 minutes had, "The purses pissed me off. And I am someone who loves purses."

Halcyon: It is still up there? Oh, I thought I took it off, oh no.

CuriousJosh: Or maybe not, I don't know.

Halcyon: That would be a bummer, like I'm, oh, oh, let me try to fix things. Can anyone tell us, is there a quote on the screen right now? I thought I turned it off ... If that's the case, oh. Oh man, that's been up there the whole time? I am learning how to use this format, I am sorry, that's lame.

I deserve lashings, everyone gets to spank me. Doxy said, "As a community, can we turn this around?" And am I going to interview him? I have put through all of my avenues a request, I have sent him messages and asked for anybody I know that might know him, I would love to do a Facebook Live because everything I know from people who have reached out, has said he's awesome, he's an activist and he is an artist and he loves our community.

And so I think that all we really need is a little bridge between what we're seeing and his intentions and maybe if we can get that bridge, we can bring him into the fold and also move forward as a community. I am getting low on battery here, so I am thinking that we start to close this up. Do you have any closing thoughts on all of the thoughts on this scenario, Josh? First of all, what's the URL that people can find your work?

CuriousJosh: Oh, actually right now the best one is on Instagram, [instagram.com/](https://www.instagram.com/curiousjosh) ... Wait a second, is this a trick? Is the commodification? Were you going to like-

Halcyon: We're on Facebook right now, this is ... although I might replay this on the Burning Man blog, in which case people are going to witch hunt you.

CuriousJosh: Let me not put my wedding website but you can find my festival work, which I don't really commodify that much.

Halcyon: All right, where's that.

CuriousJosh: Instagram, @CuriousJosh.

Halcyon: Instagram/CuriousJosh.

CuriousJosh: Yeah, yeah [crosstalk 00:56:11] Instagram is the best place where I post up new work as it comes in and you know, it's interesting because one thing that I think is really important I think in all this, as we are all growing into a culture that is now maturing generationally, from Burning Man, it's important to start to kind of acknowledge and look at the artists that are growing out of it and the ways

that they can acknowledge their participation and inspiration from the culture without it being commodification. But also realize that like ... hopefully like that post that Larry Harvey did, that there is commerce, there are artists, people are going to grow, but it's important how to do that and not commodify the experience. And I'm kind of looking forward to figuring out more where that line is because it's something important. I know this year I donated a piece to the Burning Man auction, to raise money for the arts, it's the first I've really sold one of my Burning Man prints, it went for ... it happily went for 1,400 bucks to raise the-

Halcyon: Boom.

CuriousJosh: Yep, it was a big print. But it begs that question of where ... and it's something I struggle with too, where is the value as an artist, as someone who creates imagery from this stuff as fine art or something to be erected in a museum versus commodifying the experience. What about the other artists that are growing out of this and what's their space in relationship to the event without commodifying it? Because we're all ... I mean one of the things we do is inspire artists. So where is that line? It's pretty easy to see when someone crosses it by selling small reproductions of an art piece or is it? What is that line? I'm still trying to figure this out.

Halcyon: I want to say thank you so much for coming on with me today Josh. As triggered as I had been by this fashion situation, it's also been a huge struggle for me, and a way for me to like, wait a minute, where does my livelihood, and my art ... is it okay for a sculptor to put a picture of their Burning Man sculpture of their professional website, if they're a professional artist? I would think so and yet, what is my Burning Man art? Me, so can I put a picture of me on my website at Burning Man? These are the questions that I think that we got to figure out and as you said, the scenario when the 10 principles were created is a different world.

We did not have this movement of people that were trying bring our culture into our commercial world. And maybe there is some more finesse required to the principles or to the practices because we don't want to ... if someone's going to create a Burning Man influenced business, that's good, right? Because we live in a commercial society. We don't want all of this magic to happen within Black Rock City.

So I'm excited that we're having these conversations, I think that there is ... this is not a black and white arena and I want to apologize for ... to the artist for dragging him into this without him being there. I hope that you join me for a Facebook Live, I would love to have your personal experiences. But I'm grateful for you making this into the forefront, so that we can figure out what is decommodification, what is gifting in a world where we have this generation of people where Burning Man is a part of our gifts that we want to use to influence a default world.

CuriousJosh: Right, that's right, yeah.

Halcyon: Thank you Josh, thank you everyone who tuned in. This has been fun, let's do it again. I'll see you at home.

CuriousJosh: Yes.

Halcyon: Love you.

CuriousJosh: And south of the border in a few weeks.

Halcyon: I'll see you there. Bye everybody.

CuriousJosh: Bye.