



Fern Shaffer: Performance & Ritual Works



Fern Shaffer is an American painter, performance artist, lecturer, and environmental advocate. This session explores her 9-year ritual, materials, locations, and purpose.

**TOP EMBODIMENT TIP:** Plant trees

9-Year Ritual: **Shaffer Shares Her Stories in Mid-Trance Under a 75-lbs Costume Behind the Photos of Sacred Places**

In collaboration with Othello Anderson and inspired by Edgar Casey, Mircea Eliade, and Michael Harner.

- **Winter Solstice 1985:** Ice storm in Chicago on Lake Michigan (Cover of Re-enchantment of Art by Suzi Gablik).
- **Indian burial ground 1895:** Environment threatened by farmers/material from canvas and raffia.
- **Forest fire:** Spreading cornmeal because the earth likes to be fed during change.
- **Indian Nuclear Compound Harmonic Conversion 1987:** Intervention so the situation did not go out of hand.
- **Farmland Ring of fire 1989:** 20 rolls of film 35 images on a roll, only 2 photos survived from the photo process.
- **Garbage dump in University of Chicago, Illinois, 1991:** Bubble wrap and plastic robe plus a diet coke bottle rattle.
- **Death Valley to Green Point, Newfoundland:** A new century from industrial to technology requires a new robe. The birth of the 9-year ritual on January 9, 1995, and one month up until September (9th month).
- **Pacific Ocean, Big Surf, on February 9, 1996:** 2nd ritual was water health (invited by James Hillman).
- **Mineral Point, Wisconsin, on March 9, 1997:** Cornbelt full of chemicals and became ill (March).
- **Blue Ridge Mountain, Virginia, on April 9, 1998:** Documentation for extracting coal.
- **The lowest elevation of the Northern Hemisphere in Death Valley, California, on May 9, 1999:** (Grant).
- **Temagami Island, Ontario, Canada, on June 9, 2000:** covered in blackflies and mosquitoes.
- **Headwaters of the Mississippi River on July 9, 2001:** Another water ritual for rivers as protection.
- **Green Point, Newfoundland, on August 9, 2002:** The photographs become a memory of the rituals.
- **Cashe River Basin, Illinois, on September 9, 2003:** Alternative Swamp to the Everglades, the swampland assists in natural hurricane relief. Needed to purchase a new car to drive home and a year for the costume to dry.

Collected Quotes: **Critics and Comments Mentioned**

- Feminist Art critic Gloria Orenstein - *"... an emerging eco-feminist movement describing rituals as introducing feminist matriarchal Renaissance"* / Thomas McEvilley - *"Earth Mother or fertility goddess invoking non-western or non-modern identities in the service of ecological concern... energy and thought centered on equal balance and harmony between nature, science and spirit"*

Resources

- ❖ **Website:** [Fern Shaffer](#)
- ❖ **References:** [Edgar Cayce](#) / [Reenchantment of Art by Suzi Gablik](#)



## **Fern Shaffer**





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