

Thoughts on the 2020/21 pandemic: by Peter Wayne Lewis. South Orange, NJ

I have always considered that we as the human species are dwelling inside a body which surrounds us; that we call nature. The space that surrounds our individual bodies that delineate our borders and shape of our appearance, enhanced through our senses, creates what we call reality.

In 1347 the Black Death-Pandemic was ravaging Europe in the middle ages, which represents the cycle of death and rebirth. The European Renaissance was beginning and with the great Jan Van Eyck painting, *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434), there are visual planes creating the illusion of differing realities through mirroring. Differing realities inside reflections, perhaps like what is postulated through the theoretical physics idea of STRINGS, create what we consider to be matter and the shape of the world.

Inside the human body are internal organs; our brains, heart, liver, stomach, etc. There are biological parasites that assist us with digestion and keep the body healthy and maintain the ability to heal itself. The antibodies that fight off invasive viruses, diseases are mechanisms of maintaining a semblance of order.

Alan Guth, the physicist at MIT, had great insights into what is called the false vacuum and the trigger of the big bang and precursor theories. This represents to me a reflection of another world, inside a world or multiverse. There are layers of realities inside other realities; or, inside the metaphor of the human body.

The internal organs of the cosmos are the planets, stars, light, gravity, space, worm holes, black holes, dark matter, strong nuclear and weak nuclear force and much more within the body of the cosmos. The human animal is a mere speck inside this body; while at times creating havoc, disrupting the balance of our immediate eco system through pollution in the environment, global warming and ruptures in our atmosphere. If the human body heals itself by attacking invasive elements with good antibodies then by inference the body cosmos, as a living entity by a different definition, also attacks invasive elements. The human population has the capacity to be an invasive element to the cosmos; as well as a good enzyme by being in harmony with the surrounding fields of energy.

This pandemic has given us an opportunity to make changes to our societies and cultures and it seems quite apparent that the veil over the beauty of our environment has once again been lifted, revealing blue skies where they have not been seen in a generation. And, animals are moving in a seamless fashion, as they should be once again.

The imperative directive for the human being is self-preservation, which is located in the deepest recesses of our reptilian brains. That being said, there has been several occasions in our collective history when the human specie almost became extinct. In these tragic moments like now, paying attention to these opportunities to reengineer the civilization, we have evolved our consciousness and made great leaps of the imagination. The invention of painting was such a thing, that came into being at a different time, as a way to map our experiences and the shape of the world, in order to help us from going extinct.

I am looking forward to seeing what is unfolding in the creative imagination, as we move out of the current pandemic with such loss, pathos to bear witness once again to transcending, while creating other enlightened cultural shifts.

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PETER WAYNE LEWIS was born in Kingston, Jamaica, immigrating to Sacramento, California with his parents in 1962, and becoming an American citizen in 1983. He received his M.A. in Painting from San Jose State University in California and was a tenured Professor of Painting at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston for 25 years, including a stint as Chairman of the Department. He maintains an ambitious studio practice, splitting his time between the New York Metro area and Beijing, China, where he is also the Director of Oasis Gallery-Beijing.

Peter has exhibited extensively in the US, Africa, Caribbean, Europe, and Asia. Recent solo exhibitions include The Delaware Contemporary (2019-2020) in Wilmington, DE; a survey of paintings produced in his studio in Beijing at UCCA - Ullens Center of Contemporary Art in Beijing (curated by Philip Tinari, 2016); and MOCA-North Miami (2015) as well as gallery exhibitions on three continents. He is in numerous public and private collections in the U.S. and abroad.