

## ***Live Love Lightspeed***

Henry Law

In his 1917-18 text *Science as a Vocation*, sociologist Max Weber details his use of the word ‘disenchantment’ to characterise the modernist transition from religious faith to a rational world order. Weber declares ‘rationalization and intellectualization’ to be the scourge of enchantment during which spirituality was superseded by science. Ever since the Enlightenment did away with spirituality and the once virtuous attributes of belief and faith, the artistic imagination has contended to fill the void left behind.

Spirituality, mysticism and the esoteric continue to resonate with the practices of Jesse Bowling and Samuel Jackson. *Live Love Lightspeed* at KINGS Artist-Run continues the body of work shown in their September exhibition *Algorithmic Chicanery—Lightspeed Spirituality* (2018) at Cool Change Contemporary in Perth, through reference to various arcane practices of spirituality and their supersession in the contemporary social environment.

*Three Canticles of the Oracle* (2018), the collective title of Jackson’s multimedia assemblages, examines divination through the aggregation of fetish objects used to revere past and present oracles. Inside the oracle’s prismatic form, a clairvoyant audio recording speaks about stock markets and algorithms. The oracle’s foresight suggests a sense in which the world is formulated or preconceived through predictive modelling (the prediction of future market outcomes through statistical data). Here, divination occupies the space between the scientific in its exacting methodology and the artistic in its preformative aspects. In that science demands a strict adherence to scientific principle whilst artistic practice allows for modes of inquiry embedded in uncertainty. Jackson’s oracle is a vessel of predictive powers, producing a kind of animist belief in a distinct spiritual essence belonging to the object.

Worldly essences have taken a more literal form in the recent work of Bowling. *Emotion Algo. (Tell me how I feel, cause I don’t)* (2018) with naturopath Joelleen Winduss Paye, includes in its materials the homeopathic consumer good Bach Flower Remedy, a tincture of water, brandy and flower material. For *Live Love Lightspeed* Bowling continues a study of pharmacology and homeopathy through the design and production of remedial products. *rejuvigel*, a dietary supplement-cum-psychiatric medicine, comprises an ingredients list of caffeine, water, agar-agar kombucha, blueberry, Rhodiola rosea, ibuprofen and 5-HTP—a naturally occurring amino acid and precursor in the biosynthesis of serotonin. Displayed through the visual language of marketing strategies, *rejuvigel* recalls the current resurgence in New Age holistic medical practices. Bowling paradoxically alludes to the anxious drive of ‘well-being’ and ‘self-care’ markets while simultaneously offering the solution on how to deal with this anxiety.

From the perspective of the artists, ‘esotericism is in part concerned with a re-enchantment of the world.’<sup>1</sup> Notably, the recurrent characteristic of Bowling and Jackson’s understanding and engagement with processes of ‘re-enchantment’ is that they equate the esoteric with a sense of Naturalism; that is, they do not appeal to supernatural forces. Rather, the forces at play in *Live Love Lightspeed* seemingly point to the dominant and defining powers of contemporaneity; forces of the market and technology.

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<sup>1</sup> See: [https://coolchange.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CCCcatalogue\\_Sept2018.pdf](https://coolchange.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CCCcatalogue_Sept2018.pdf)