



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT - Lacy MacAuley, LacyMacAuley@gmail.com

202-733-4640 office, 202-815-0288 mobile

CATHARSIS ON THE MALL 2016 “OUR JOURNEY HOME” MEMORIAL TO TRAUMA VICTIMS TO BE BURNED ON THE NATIONAL MALL

WASHINGTON, DC – Four days after the election, a memorial will be burned on the grounds of the Washington Monument dedicated to those whose lives have been affected by trauma. The 48-hour national vigil, titled [Catharsis on the Mall: A Vigil for Healing](#), begins on Veteran’s Day at 11:11am, Friday, November 11, 2016. This free and inclusive event features speakers, workshops, narrative-braiding, education, art, music, dance, and direct participation. Visuals include colorful art, sculptures, geodesic domes, a 60-foot dragon-shaped mobile soundstage, and a **30-foot-tall temple which will be set on fire.**

This year the vigil’s theme is "Our Journey Home." The theme is inspired by the healing journey embarked upon by all who have been torn away from their safety and security by trauma. The event is about shaking free from the stigmas of surviving. Participants will gather to honor and support those who have traveled this road. This year Catharsis on the Mall will take place over Veteran’s Day weekend, the weekend immediately following the presidential election.

“The intention here is to be present to what is going on in our country. We need healing on every level,” explains organizer Robert ‘Roman’ Haferd. “Our event is an observance and a celebration. Through ritual fire we heal from a traumatic election, and through art and dance we celebrate steps forward such as President Obama’s recent signing of legislation creating a bill of rights for sexual assault survivors.”

The annual vigil is dedicated to bringing community together and allowing a space for healing and transformation. Each year the organizers select a theme to elevate understanding and guide the content. The theme creates connections and conversations when participants’ diverse interests, knowledge, and backgrounds intersect in non-partisan space on the National Mall.

The vigil will culminate in a **permitted burn ceremony beginning at 8:00pm on Saturday, November 12, 2016.** Designed by veteran and artist [Michael Verdon](#), the Temple of Rebirth is a 30-foot-tall structure that creates a space for personal and collective healing. During the vigil, participants will leave writings, images, and small objects to be burned away. Allowing them to

be burned collectively is an act of healing and helps to facilitate transformation. This sacred fire practice draws on traditions from across the globe, and was popularized by David Best at Burning Man beginning in 2000.

“Our stories are woven into the work and then released in the structure’s transformation,” Verdon said. “We rise from those ashes.”

Catharsis is offering more daytime and nighttime programming than it did last year, and is excited to announce two large, interactive art works: the Anti-War Machine and [Abraxas](#). These two installations together symbolize the duality of war and peace.

The Anti-War Machine, a retired ambulance, features two viewing levels surrounded in rainbow fabric. Atop the Anti-War Machine is a geodesic “All-Sphere,” that illuminates at night, providing a beacon for visitors to find their way home.

Abraxas, a 60-foot golden dragon built atop a transformed school bus, will be making its second appearance in Washington DC. The Golden Dragon paraded the streets of DC in 2010 during the “Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear.” Equipped with a 10,000-watt sound system and three viewing levels, **Abraxas will make her second voyage on the DC streets at 6:30am, Sunday, November 13 when she parades around the National Mall at sunrise for federal government support of PTSD research.** The circular route will symbolize “Our Journey Home.”

“This event is a secular humanist spiritual experience at which all are welcome,” says Adam Eiding, DC community activist and organizer. “Our country will benefit from the healing and unity Catharsis on the Mall will bring.”

Catharsis on the Mall is organized by Washington-area activists and Burning Man enthusiasts, and is supported by [Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies](#), [Gender Illumination](#), [March for ERA](#), and many individuals who have donated so much to keep this event priceless.

The official event website is <http://www.CatharsisOnTheMall.com>

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Photo by Doug Sanford – 11/21/2015

TIMELINE FOR CATHARSIS ON THE MALL

6pm, Thursday, November 3 – Fundraiser at Mellow Mushroom

Tuesday morning, November 8 – Volunteers install turf protection on the National Mall to provide space for Abraxas and the Anti-War Machine to be assembled

Tuesday afternoon, November 8 to Friday morning, November 11 – Volunteers assemble Abraxas, the Anti-War Machine, infrastructure, and the Temple of Rebirth

11:11am Friday, November 11 – Catharsis on the Mall officially begins with the Opening Ceremony for the Temple of Rebirth

Afternoon Friday, November 11 to Evening, Saturday November 12 – Speakers and Music, Schedule TBA

6pm, Saturday, November 12 – The Temple of Rebirth closes to the general public

8pm, Saturday, November 12 – The fire conclave begins the ceremony at the Temple of Rebirth

8:30pm, Saturday, November 12 – The Temple of Rebirth is set ablaze

9:30pm, Saturday, November 12 until 6:30am, Sunday, November 13 – Cathartic dancing until sunrise

6:30am to 9:00am, Sunday, November 13 – Abraxas leads parade around the National Mall

1:13pm, Sunday, November 13 – Catharsis on the Mall closes for the year. Infrastructure and art cars begin to be disassembled

Tuesday morning, November 15 – The turf protection on the National Mall is removed and the National Mall is vacated



Abraxas on Pennsylvania Ave – 10/30/2010



Abraxas at Burning Man festival – 8/30/2016 – Photo by Karl Baba



The Anti-War Machine at Burning Man – 8/30/2016 – Photo by Karl Baba

