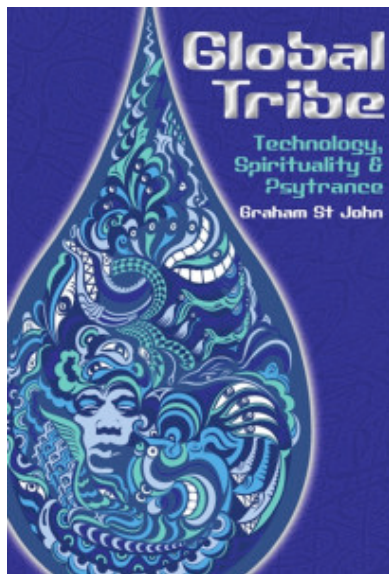


Interview with Graham St John

By Geert Lovink

Australian cultural critic Graham St John has written a groundbreaking study on the way the [electronic dance music](#) (EDM) genre called [Goatrance](#) globalized itself as a movement. In [Global Tribe: Technology, Spirituality and Psytrance](#) (Equinox, 2012), he describes Goatrance not merely as a subcategory of EDM. Psytrance, as it is also called, is first and foremost a culture that is celebrated through events such as parties and festivals. The emphasis here is not on regular clubs or labels but on personal transformation which is celebrated in a collective fashion. Music has a supportive role here, it is literally a medium, a transportative vehicle to carry us into another realm of consciousness. As Graham points out in the intro, "Enabling departures from dominant codes of practice and arrivals at alternative modes of being, the dance floor and the community proliferating around its verges, are built according to the design of a radical utopian imagination." The traveller-scholar St John has given himself the task to articulate, theorize and popularize that imagination. Because of the 'serving' task of the music, music criticism plays less of a role in this case.



If anything, Graham St John is a Critic of the Cosmic Event. I'd love to see him as a contemporary organic intellectual (as Gramsci defined it) of the psytrance movement. His intimate knowledge of the festivals and their 'architectonics of transition' has put Graham St John at odds with traditional (Anglo-Saxon) academia that has a hard time understanding underground cultures which position themselves outside of the pop mainstream. Although he is passionate about music, Graham St John is not a musicologist. He is a chronologist of the movement that records and

reflects on spiritual cultures. He shies away from taking up the role of the ideologist. He is not the type of guy who describes what is on the other side of the 'doors of perception' such as Kesey, Leary, McKenna and others. In 2003 we were colleagues at the Brisbane [Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies](#) under Graeme Turner. In the years after we managed to meet up several times and stayed in contact, for instance over the Dancecult journal and list that Graham co-founded. The launch of this major chronology of the movement seemed the right moment to do an interview.

After an introduction that maps out transnational psycultures, Global Tribe takes us back to the unruly 1970s and 1980s when hippies the world over embarked for Goa (India) to camp out on Anjuna Beach, make music and dance. It was around the mid-80s that a distinct DJ-led dance culture emerged in Goa, produced by travelling DJs who brought cassettes, DAT tapes and later CDs. In the mid section of the book Graham looks at the darker sides of the psytrance experience, the 'spiritual technologies' and describes the technoshamanism, in part induced by psychedelic drugs. A third part describes the 'carnival' aspect of psychedelic festivals and related visionary arts. We then dig into case studies of festival scenes in Israel and Australia (where the events are called 'doofs'). Throughout the study St John comes back to his visits to Boom, one of Europe's largest festivals in Portugal, visited by tens of thousands, prompting the central question of Global Tribe: what is the sociality and sensuality of dance?

Geert Lovink: In the book there are traces of your own experience, but not all that many. You struggle to get recognition as an academic scholar while at the same time you are also clearly part of this spiritual trance movement. Do you also keep a diary? Are there things you hesitate to write about? Global Tribe attempts to be an official history of the exodus of the movement, post-Goa, becoming a planetary phenomenon.

Graham St John: Global Tribe is layered with my own experience in a style that I believe is accessible, certainly by comparison to most academic books. I've tried to produce a book that is accessible to those outside academia. This is not an easy task, especially given that those trained within the social sciences do not normally possess advanced literary skills. And also, many of those within the wider movement population (the "global tribe") are from non-English backgrounds. And besides, it is notoriously difficult to write about the vibe from a "scientific" angle without coming across as a massive douche nozzle.

I'm not as preoccupied with being recognised within academia as you seem to infer. Most academics are politicians and administrators working in environments rewarding the greatest competitors and charlatans. I've sought to avoid this. Most of my current work is in fact part of an effort to move beyond the confines and limitations of academia. At this stage, I may not publish another academic book, as continuing exploitation by the academic publishing industry is not a relationship I've grown fond of.

My writing method is like the zone report technique. Given that the experience of events is relatively temporary and not uncommonly intense, when I emerge from an event (party, festival, gathering...) it has usually been the case that I immerse myself in writing. This has most often been in the form of blogging, so my "diary" as such becomes rather public and also a great way of soliciting feedback and ensuring accuracy. These blog reports have often been the basis for later articles and book chapters. I haven't done much lately, but I keep a [blog](#).

At [Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture](#) we encourage authors to write "zone" style reports with experimental stylistic and experiential angles submitted to our From the Floor section.

There are things I hesitate to write about. This cultural movement is permeated with ambiguity with relation to the law. Electronic dance music cultures are by their very nature outside or between the law, which can be observed from a variety of angles – e.g. unpermitted events, the use of prohibited substances or the unlicensed mixing of controlled media content, an experimentalism in consumption and production practices that challenge laws, regulations and codes. Any researcher needs to be careful in order to protect not only themselves but also their interlocutors and the events they write about. That said, self-censoring everything one does and says is anathema to cutting edge research and writing. Finding artful techniques of representation is a challenge, which can be rewarding. In my own experience, blog reports and subsequent articles and chapters are among efforts to push the boundaries of writing as method. See my recent article in Dancecult on "writing the vibe" for instance, which remixed what I call nanomedia – fragments of popular culture and media sources re-mediated and programmed by EDM producers in music – as one way to represent the vibe, i.e. perform the impossible (<http://dj.dancecult.net/index.php/journal/article/view/164/188>).

GL: Do you prefer live pieces or can't we speak of a distinction between

live and pre-recorded? Do you believe in the perfect sample? In your book you describe the importance of live music that started off with the hours-long sessions of bands like the Grateful Dead. The schism you describe around the late seventies, between the analogue, acoustic live jamming session on the Goa beach and the update of consumer electronics such as cassettes and DAT recording I find very interesting in this respect.

GS: Liveness is a thoroughly contentious issue in EDM performance and its study. I broached this in the book, but it's covered more comprehensively elsewhere. There will be those who argue for the genuine or authentic nature of "live" performance, by which is often meant bands or fusion bands, using traditional instruments, e.g. a drum kit, but as has long been recognised, technics, from mixing desks to DJ performance software manipulated on screen, from turntables to DAT, are instruments "played" by musicians (i.e. DJ/producers). Of course, artists will establish varying degrees of competence and skilfulness in techniques of production and performance, but it has long been recognised that production and performance are inseparable in EDM. Ultimately DJ/producers are playing an organic instrument that is you - i.e. your body on the dance floor, and dancers are responding to an assemblage of factors, associated with a range of sensory technologies optimised for a live experience. But DJs aren't working alone, which is one of the reasons why the question of liveness is often wrongfooted. DJs collaborate with a network of engineers and technicians, visual artists, stage designers in any standard dance party or festival environment, and how well they do this is subject to ongoing internal debate and discussion within scenes which seek to optimise and re-optimize these relationships integral to EDM event-cultures.

GL: Can you also imagine a psytrance that would have gone in a completely different direction, not electronic (techno) but for instance more influenced by world music? Can we say that the electronic element is essential or is it rather accidental, a vehicle for trance? In your book you emphasize the centrality of dance. Dance comes first, it brings you in the desired mood, the trance (induced by drugs). The music style comes second. What counts is the rhythm.

GS: For some of those involved in the early full moon party scene in Goa, which was a cosmic rock scene, they anticipated a movement that for them was thoroughly ruined by electronic music by the early 1980s. One of the founders of the trance dance music scene in Anjuna, Steve Devas, who

brought the first sound system to Anjuna in 1974, was enthusiastic at that time about what he called the “Cosmo Rock” style which, as he stated to me and is reproduced in the book, was “a potentially dynamic and inspiring style of music to follow seventies UK and California rock into an Indo-Hybrid new wave of rock music, that was to be high, lyrical and drivey with ethno world funk baselines to make for subtle and sophisticated dance movements. In other words, music for beach, sun and palm trees and not cars, factories and mechanical big city urban landscapes”.

As we know, by the mid 1980s, the performance of electronic music (by DJs) had come to dominate these same full moon events and their subsequent developments. Electrosonic technics became integral to psychedelic trance as it was to all other EDM developments, from house to techno. What became Goatrance and psychedelic trance, which is as much a culture as it is music, is a phenomenon that was enabled by developments in electronic music production and performance. As key producers, label heads and event management in this movement will tell you, sound frequencies and scales were being produced by synthesisers that were not available with traditional instruments. Besides this, it has been much easier and cheaper to organise and reproduce events in remote regions like Goa or in many of the out of the way places in which festivals and parties are held using DJs in the place of bands. In Goa, one DJ like DJ Laurent using a DAT player could be responsible for an 8-10 hour set that was mind blowing, as opposed to a series of bands with a lot of equipment requiring more effort, money, energy and resources. Today’s festivals are downstream from this efficiency and resourcefulness, although they have become increasingly optimised with very high production values, and diversified. For instance, Portugal’s Boom Festival features a fusion band stage/dance floor, in conjunction with several other dancefloors, returning us in a way to the earlier fusional environment of Goa, which is certainly a success for Boom, since it emerged as an effort to reproduce the Goa seasonal party experience outside of Goa.

GL: Culturally you position the post-Goa Trance movement across the globe as part of the 1990s post-Cold War movements defined by their cyberoptimism, spiritual renaissance and the collective rituals of transition and consciousness experiences. Do you think that this New Age style of events has come to an end after the global financial crisis and the growth of (youth) unemployment? After all, visiting global festival does cost money, in particular the travelling. You could estimate that the post-Goa-movement would become more regional or even local.

GS: Today's events are diverse, which is a theme implicit to the book, as it's a diversity that was there from the inception, and which remains, despite industry and aesthetic formulas. I wouldn't characterise psychedelic trance or its event culture as New Age, certainly not by any standard measurements of "New Age". For one thing, that term has grown empty of meaning in the present, especially in relation to events in which transpersonal experiences may be occasioned within social contexts, i.e. that are participatory and relational. Studies which perceive spirituality as private and internalised, don't tend to account for this. What's more, in studies of New Age phenomena there is little accounting for the alteration of consciousness using psychoactivating or psychointegrating compounds from MDMA to LSD or DMT, etc. This is largely because the academic study of what became identified as New Age was overseen by public funded intellectuals who avoided anything to do with illicit substances given the moratorium on research associated with prohibition. But it's also simply the case that most participants in this movement won't identify as New Agers. As mentioned, it's a complex development. Since the early 2000s we've seen the development of "dark" styles of trance which now dominate the nightscapes of festivals and which now even have exclusive festivals. Sometimes rather brutal in aesthetic, these styles are rooted in gothic sensibilities some of which steer a great distance from the progressive and holistic pretensions of Goatrance.

Psychedelic trance is first and foremost localised – around the world scenes have developed and thrived in local regions. There is no question of it becoming regional – it already is. The recent re-emergence of the scene publication *Trancers Guide the Galaxy* reflects this, as the publication features scene reports from a couple dozen countries where psychedelic trance thrives, 20 years after its initial development. This is despite the global financial crisis in recent years. A focused study of psychedelic traveller-tourism might offer some insights on this, but perhaps it is the case that times of crisis are followed by a common desire to be together, which in the case of psytrance as well as other EDM scenes, is an ecstatic desire to be altered together, using a variety of shared sensory technologies. This is close to the argument made by Peter Shapiro in *Turn the Beat Around: The Secret History of Disco*. EDM movements have arisen in history and have exploded across the world, maintaining form or mutating, in response to present conditions of crisis. These dance movements take a variety of forms, from the more legitimised with a corporatized style of communitas to the more experimental and alternative. The greatest obstacle to these developments

remains state intervention, onerous permit requirements, police interventions, and ultimately I would argue, normalisation. Event-cultures of this kind seek a delicate balance between retaining exclusivity and opening the doors.

GL: Can you imagine that next movement will focus more on the economics of the festivals and have a more egalitarian approach in terms of the redistribution of income? Can you tell us more about the controversies that happen now and then between mainstream organisers that ask entry fees for festival and the more autonomous free events? The last one sounds more idealistic but in fact works contrary if you want to set up a more sustainable economy. Can you imagine that you will paid, one day, to be the movement's organic intellectual? I see an urgency here.

GS: Well, I don't know about organic intellectual, but I have been speaking at events for the last few years. There are a growing number of festivals that feature cultural programs with workshop and lecture programs which have become rather professional downstream from developments at the Boom Festival in particular which features an excellent and formative area called the Liminal Village which has daily programs for a week including lectures and films on a host of themes of importance to the population of an event that now averages about 25K. This is clearly more than just a dance music event and psytrance is clearly more than just about music. And Boom also hosts music styles outside of psytrance. This is why I prefer to use the term psyculture.

The 2013 Ozora Festival in Hungary is another example of a major festival, identifying as a "psychedelic tribal gathering", which features a cultural program (in which I participated) and is striving to be more than a dance festival. For instance, like Boom, and Burning Man, it features a daily newspaper. For the record, since you mentioned it, while some of these events might pay, it's rarely even enough to cover my own transport expenses.

There is a great deal of debate internal to this movement over a range of developments, including the price of event tickets. But there is no simplified way to look at it, because there are many angles. A great many people earn their livelihood trading their services, arts, labours at these events, offering their services and technical support to event management, as well as trade goods and services at festivals, some travelling in circuits all year round. Others will volunteer their labour at events in exchange for entry and

perhaps earn meal tickets. Others are given the opportunity to experiment with new techniques or methods, for instance, within healing arts or waste management (e.g. bio-toilets and showers). Commercial festivals are diverse and large scale industries upon which many travellers and those living largely “off the grid” are able to survive. Within the psychedelic movement, the nature of this commercialism is subject to constant scrutiny. For instance, corporate sponsorship of events is generally roundly criticised.

GL: There is the critique of the ‘mob-driven, hedonistic numbness’ of certain participants during big festivals. The massive mainstream character of the festivals is certainly something that is the case here in the Netherlands. Is the trend towards smaller, more secretive happenings inevitable? And do you find the critique of big festivals as spiritual spectacles justified? Has the commercialism around 2007-2008 undermined Psytrance?

GS: Commercialism has not killed psytrance, nor psyculture. Scenes rely on commercialism to sustain a variety of industries upon which a vast network of people and communities rely for their survival. Most of all, the musicians – i.e. the people who produce the music upon which this industry relies – need to make a return for their efforts which in a world of file-sharing means live appearances at ticketed events. The reality is complex, and always more complicated than any one person can know. I do not claim to hold a commanding view over the heights of psyculture. It is a massive and constantly shifting movement, with elements leading in different directions and new scenes and regional scenes emerging and changing all the time. I have attempted to document something of this diversity in the book. Single events are characteristic of this diversity. There are also many free or by donation parties that happen in most cosmopolitan centres and their hinterlands like around Melbourne. Large festivals that charge for entrance, like Boom, offer freedoms to experiment, express and explore alternatives in ways that small events that may be free of charge do not. Are such events not also free cultural spaces, since they are cultural spaces that promote freedoms?

All that said I recently saw how psytrance is getting showcased at multi-genre events like the Boomtown Fair in the UK, where those who can afford the 170 quid ticket become exposed to a condensed simulacra of the scene. In this contrivance, mega and crossover events, like Boomtown, appear to host EDM spaces as relatively self-contained stylistic worlds. Perhaps the promo for such an event could be “Have we got Psytrance for you!” I’m

playing with the phrase “Have we got a vacation for you!”, the slogan from Delos, the promoters of themed worlds for high-end customers, including Westworld, in Michael Crichton’s Sci Fi novel by that name, adapted for the 1973 MGM film... But then it might be really cool to oscillate between Psyworld and Dubworld.

GL: Over the years, many have tried to politicise the movement. In retrospect, can we say that this is failed project because the participants were more interested in their private transitional experience? In many cultures spiritual border experiences through music, dance and drugs is controversial enough. Wouldn’t it make more sense to emphasize the underground aspect of Psytrance? To politicise the movement, to make it more public, and democratize its intentions, always runs the risk of instrumentalization—and eventually disappointment.

GS: You may hold to a narrow version of “politics” that I don’t share. In my previous book *Technomad: Global Raving Countercultures*, I tried to outline a theory of resistance that grew out of studies of EDM cultures which I called “hyper-responsibility”. That is, I saw that techno-tribes across EDM genres mount vibes (socio-sonic aesthetics) that are characterised by a spectrum of responses to the conditions of the present among its practitioners. Events are vehicles for differential freedoms from a range of conditions experienced by participants. They may be opportunities for transgression, or personal liberations, and they may be platforms for reactionary or progressive movements whose goals lie beyond the dancefloor. Psychedelic trance possesses this hyper-responsiveness. In some cases, the simple act of holding a party within repressive social and political climates is a definite political accomplishment. Expressing one’s commitment towards cognitive freedom in a global climate of repressive drug legislation are actions that should be recognised as political. In other cases holding events in times of social transformation – early Goa parties in Germany for example – furnishes events with a revolutionary sensibility.

GL: In *Global Tribe* you have not focused on an analysis of the music. Can you do that for us and describe, in detail, one of your favourite tracks of psytrance? What’s the sound, the vibe, of psytrance? What do you hear that we do not experience?

GS: Yes, the music does not receive analysis in the fashion that would be treated, for instance, by a musicologist or a music historian. But then again, musicologists have a habit of squeezing the life from cultural experience in

overly technical analyses. What you're getting is what is stated on the tin – i.e. the book is not music history or music criticism.

I provide here, however, a basic description of the Goa Trance sound from which psychedelic trance and its various subgenre developments are indebted. This description was put together with the help of Toni Aittoniemi who recently completed an MA on the [“Cultural and Musical Dimensions of Goa Trance and Early Psychedelic Trance in Finland”](#) (this description could be expanded and music criticism applied to this and subsequent developments).

Although the sound, which emerged by 1994 as a marketable genre, received great variation according to stylistic influences, fusional developments, and regional aesthetics, there emerged a 'classic' Goa Trance style led by a strong four quarter-note kick drum pattern in 4/4, with a more or less constant accentuation of the 16th-note layer at bpm's between 130-150. Prominent early artists experimented with analogue sound sources, digital and hybrid synthesizers, samplers and digital drum machines to build evolving patterns with layered synth sounds and sub-bass frequencies in hypnotic arrangements. Artists used MIDI (Multiple Instrument Digital Interface), computers, and software.

Among the most familiar sounds were the fast arpeggio-patterns and strong sawtooth-wave leads running through a resonant band-pass or high-pass filter, such as found in the work of Astral Projection and Etnica. Early works employed additive rhythmic characteristics in the bassline, like the Latin-American tresillo (the duple-pulse rhythmic cell) or variations of “oriental patterns.” While syncopation receded in later developments, intricate triple-meter accenting embedded in a “straight” duple-framework persisted in the higher frequency layers, arpeggios, percussive elements and leads. These embedded alternative signatures combined with the frequent use of the Phrygian Major scale to give Goa Trance an “Eastern” feel. The tracks were programmed into 8-10 minute long pieces.

GL: Is some of this music online? Can you give some pointers? Compilations are important, I understood. The album was never the right format for this type of music. Can you mention a few more 'classic' tracks that you like? We're now 20-30 years later. How would you describe the style and the 'feel' of the music?

GS: Netlabels have grown popular here as in other EDM developments. One

chief portal (and label) is [EktoPlazm](#), founded by Alexander Synaptic (Basilisk). That site incidentally features a spectrum of psychedelic electronic music, where the term “psytrance” holds much less explanatory power than it once did. A “one stop shop” (it’s a free download) can land you the epic EktoPlazm’s Greatest Trips, 50 tracks from 2008-2012 compiled by Basilisk showcasing [“the immense diversity and creative vitality of the global psychedelic trance, techno, and downtempo movements”](#).

Albums and EPs (in digital files) continue to be a chief means by which artists will make a name for themselves, alongside Soundcloud, and there is prestige to being selected on label compilations, and ultimately selected by touring DJs. Expressing artistic vision in concept albums appears retained in this development, inheriting much from psychedelic forebears, although the “vision” is somewhat distributed as artists can take on a variety of personas and be involved with numerous acts, in response to changing styles and tastes. In many cases, the overall vision seems to be retained, as with the prodigious output of Jake Stephenson (aka Shamanic Tribes on Acid - i.e. STONA) who was involved in, from the last count at Discogs, some 58 named production projects. The industry characteristics of this development deserve greater attention, including how many DJ/producer names in the psychedelic tradition are more than just names, but invented personas.

“Classic” covers quite some territory for me and I could go on for pages, but from a mid-1990s era perspective I’ll be mercifully brief - besides Hallucinogen (Simon Posford) who was responsible for shaping the sound of psychedelic trance with many classic tracks like anything from The Lone Deranger, as well as tracks like “Space Pussy” and “LSD” (Posford is also the chief engineer behind chief act in the psychedelic diaspora Sphongle (with Raja Ram), I like early X-Dream, Earth Nation, Total Eclipse, Astral Projection, Etnica, Eat Static, System 7, Third Eye, Human Blue, Synchro (on the psybreaks edge), and UX, especially “Master of the Universe” which was dark and brooding and thunderous psychedelic opera, and ahead of its time (their album Ultimate Experience (1997) was recently remastered to superb effect). Ultimately I cannot nail it down to any one sound. But as far as the music is concerned, it’s all about the context - i.e. the dancefloor and the event itself. You cannot understand this music, nor indeed most EDM sounds, through your headphones at home or in the car. It’s truly experienced as shared vibrating rhythms in fully optimised social dance contexts. In my experience, the most optimised environment for this experience is the Dance Temple (i.e the main dancefloor) at the Boom

Festival.

GL: What do you make of Simon Reynolds' [retromania](#) thesis? Psytrance is not precisely retro. If anything it could be labelled as '1990s music'. Still, all the retrogarde aspect of the contemporary recording industry affect psytrance as well.

GS: I haven't read Retromania. I agree that there remains a core Goa sensibility motoring this development across generations, a whole gestalt and marketable format that was crafted in the 1990s to simulate the seasonal DJ-led full moon beach party interzone of the 1980s, which itself built upon the cosmic throw downs of the 1970s - and which were originally and over 25 seasons subject to the influx of styles and techniques from scenes all over the world. The bandwidth of this stylistic profusion may have been narrowed at the advent of a music marketed as Goa Trance (e.g. care of Dragonfly Records) but today's events, especially the larger festivals downstream from this heritage are diverse, partly because they continue to be influenced by new trends, including as mentioned, the dark sensibility, but also dubstep, and progressive developments. And yet, when I entered the chill space on the Thursday night at the 2013 edition of the Ozora festival in Hungary, I might have been transported back to Anjuna beach in 1974 at the height of the full moon. This is among the most impressive chill spaces anywhere, and Solar Fields was coming on - good timing as I joined the buzz inside a giant beehive. Over the next 2 hours a convulsive crowd orgasm achieved peak after peak. Ambient electronica has remained integral to psyculture and has been a chief aesthetic in the psychedelic continuum, since the early Goa period and highly optimised chill spaces carry the event-cultural heritage as much as main floors.

GL: Is it possible to compare or to contrast the Psytrance with the Global Justice Movement (Seattle, Genova) and the recent occupations such as in Tel Aviv, Tahir, Occupy Wall Street and Taksim, also known as the Movements of the Squares? The aspect of gathering seems very important, you stress this time and again.

GS: Very different kinds of events, and my return question to you would be: is a favourable comparison required for psyculture events to be considered worthy of attention? Based on narrow perceptions of political behaviour, possibly not. But then I do not hold to a narrow perception of the "political". It could be argued that psyculture and visionary arts events represent the pinnacle achievement of freedom at the other end of the revolution, enabled

by liberal democracies with a healthy middle class and high standards of living. Over time, the experience filters through to those populations who do not match the privileged status of their forebears.

Can psyculture events be the means of revolution? Possibly not in terms of being confrontational or 'protestival' events, but this has not stopped events like Boom from adopting radical social and cultural agendas. In fact, like Burning Man, Boom and other events have developed as platforms for change by hosting spaces in which a range of ecological, alter-globalization and wellbeing causes are showcased, modelled by and transmitted to its participating populations and regional communities. The way an event is organised, or indeed self-organised as in the case of Burning Man, which holds to a set of principles that highlight participation, gifting, self-reliance etc., is itself the revolution in action. But I want to come back to something that is overlooked constantly in these kinds of comparisons and by people who insist on measuring the value of psycultural and visionary arts events against the Occupy movement and more recent revolutionary protest movements. Being altered together in dance, either with your neighbours in small gatherings close to home, or in an experience shared with thousands from a hundred different countries (as is the case at Boom's Dance Temple) is significant on its own and does not need to be measured against other forms of gathering.

GL: What are you working on right now? Is my desire for a comprehensive history of Goa-trance (as you have described in chapter one) justified? I seem to recall that you have not been to Goa yourself.

No, I haven't been to Goa. Global Tribe is a post Goa project, addressing the emergence and culture of festivals that arose in the slipstream of Goa. I would also point out that, as far as I am aware, researchers of Goa music scenes haven't been to Goa either, at least not Goa pre-1993 which is the year that key participants argue marked the end of the momentous seasonal and experimental trance dance era before the whole thing imploded and exploded (i.e. was transposed internationally in the form of music aesthetics and event-cultures). A comprehensive history of Goatrance is not unjustified – I'm waiting to see it myself; possibly produced by someone involved in that music scene through its development. In addition to that, it would be great to read a history of Goa seasonal party culture, pre Goatrance (i.e. 1960s-1980s). A history of the DAT and how the beach found its own uses for technology would also be fascinating.

One of the projects I'm involved in at present is a study of the Burning Man diaspora in Europe and elsewhere, a project which retains my interest in global event-cultural movements. With a global network of burners forming their own events in regions worldwide, the world's largest temporary city, Black Rock City, now has considerable reach and appeal worldwide, with regional events all over the world. It's a phenomenon warranting attention.

Graham St John, Global Tribe, Technology, Spirituality and Psytrance, Equinox, Sheffield, 2012.