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Playa Shoes – Necessity, personal belief system or cult?

By Lord Fouffpanns



Photo by Loretta

Hanging at the Saint Imelda shoe shrine.

Playa Shoe Whore is back and asking, "Is playa footwear all about performance or presentation?" Clearly, Black Rock City life demands practicality, but playa folks have been madly fashion keen. The people and their shoes are talking loud and clear.

A miraculous playa shrine to St. Imelda, the patron saint of footwear, appeared Monday near the Esplanade. St. Imelda was seen wandering along Dogma before leaving a golden shoe-bag with silver rose-covered pumps as a sign to playa followers of shoe fashion and practicality. Since the apparition, a cult following has sprung up, leaving devotional shoe offerings piled up in reverence at the unexpected miracle altar.

Sides were quickly taken and opinions have been flying like dust bunnies on playa. Unrepentant Shoe Whore Red Fox's daily "bigger than food or housing" goal is to find the happy medium, a shoe that works for the playa and the outfit. Nothing less will do! Bosquare, all function, says, "Powerboots and duct tape are the building blocks of the known universe." Ranger Binky Boot says trust and endurance are key, but concluded, "A unified shoe message? That's redundant!" Fenix and Butterfly serve dual mistresses: practicality and presentation. Sporting dusty leather thigh-boots, they cry, "Don't piss on the playa folks. It yucks up our style!" Playa Shoe Whore agrees. "Work the shoe and get your lazy butt to the porta potty!"

Glitterpussy, a self-confessed shrine devotee and more camp than cult, knows she is "closest to her soul" promenading in silver thigh-high platform boots. And Liza E. declared, "If the shoes are wrong, it all falls apart."

Playa Shoe Whore says, "Playa life demands a reality- and fashion-check!" Whether it's all about the practical or strictly form before function, it is always shoe style and substance as far as I'm concerned. Whatever you're wearing, remember to moisturize your feet daily to prevent playa foot, devoting yourself to foot care and personal shoe decoration that says, "I'm me, I'm here and I'm working this burn!"

Burning Man is a Self Service Cult.

The Temple is Coming

By Shipwreck

A well known artist on the Playa, David Best, has returned this year with a fourth intricate temple structure. Each year our community showcases art which is larger than life, Best's temples included. When Best was asked where he thinks this is all going, he said, "In some ways we are getting caught up in what the cities got caught up in, building higher and higher. I would like to build a five foot temple." Yet Best's temple is larger than life in more than just physical scale. The belief behind this year's Temple of Honor is permeating and powerful to the soul. It is the belief of forgiveness.

"Honor belongs to all people, it is honorable to stand-up for your views, resisting is honorable, the temple is about dishonor," Best said. Although the white script on black background may lead some to think that the exhibit is referencing current events and politics, Best said, "it has nothing to do with the War in the Middle East, Bush, or patriotism." The temple is a place to be forgiven, he said. "When we compromise, we dishonor."

It has not been all fun and games for Best. Delays have bogged down the Temple of Honor project since its inception. Confidential sources told the BRG the pieces of the Temple of Honor were originally fabricated by the La Fiesta Pinata Factory operating out of Chula Vista, Calif. The source mentioned that the reason for choosing this factory was that the total cost of materials was \$700, with a \$700 delivery cost to Petaluma. From Petaluma, it only cost Best \$45 to move all materials and crew to the playa. Truly beyond belief and under budget.



Photo by Durgy

Temple of Honor nears completion.

According to the source, difficulty arose in the completion of the temple because of the instructions shipped along with the materials. Since the workers at the La Fiesta facility are mostly Korean, and the factory is located in close proximity to Tijuana, they were written in Koreish, a cross between Korean and Spanish. It seems it is taking longer than anticipated to decipher them.

The source went on to tell the BRG that La Fiesta could have filled the bulbous globes of the Temple with candy for only \$545 over and above the cost of the structure. However, this was rejected by the Best team due to the seri-

ous potential for MOOP upon the release of the candy on impact with the giant pinata bats, which were also left out of the project budget.

But despite the travails, Best remains optimistic. Best exudes a pure, simple, and sacred energy when he speaks about the idea of creating his temple installations over the past few years. "It's easy to do, to make a building where someone is going to walk in and cry. I get to the opportunity to make a place where someone is going to walk in and forgive themselves or their mother. That's what's neat about it."

The 'Anti-Cult' speaks out

By How Weird and Liane Gabora

We have with us an intergalactically acclaimed expert on cults, who for reasons pertaining to his discreet, wallflower nature — not to mention fears of persecution — shall be known by the psychonym "Funkydude." Our acclaimed expert says, "The real cults are pussies when it comes to individual freedom. Notice that they are not a common sight at Burning Man. They can kiss my big white hairy ass. But I digress. Although to be honest, that is everything I have to say on the topic."

But not quite. What is the difference between a group of people who are genuine-

ly interested in what they are doing, and a group of people involved in a cult? The test to determine whether a group is a cult, Funkydude says, is to see what happens when members decide to leave. If the group accepts the will of the individual and allows the wayward being to continue down his or her unique and merry path, then no worries. But if the group tries to pull the wayward being back, watch out! For a cult will pressure you to bend your belief system into the group groove, Funkydude says, distorting you from your true path, your reason for being, and your inner nature. Your soul is captured.

Funkydude also describes a cult as being

about the dichotomy between survival of the individual versus survival of the group.

"It is the realm of the damned," he says. "And I should know, for I am Funkydude, man of the Anti-Cult."

With his eyes glazed over in disdain, Funkydude notes the presence of cults in our midst, including the fashion-fixed Costume Cult, the Turnip Head Cult (not available for interview), and the nipple torture cult headed by Nipple Girl, who will lure you to suckle her tortured nipples — only to put you under a heady spell, leaving you lying in a puddle of playa dust in a state of breathless exhilaration.

Dog Gone Confused?

By PlayaFrog

If Burning Man does not allow dogs any more, why are there still dogs on the playa?

The exceptions are the dogs that reside with Department of Public Works members and other Burning Man staff — who spend weeks or months building, setting up, maintaining and removing Black Rock City from the desert. These folks work long weeks in the sun and dust to secure the infrastructure of our beautiful city.

Some staff members do not have a permanent address, or have no choice but to have their dog with them at all times. A week in a kennel in Reno may cost \$100, and two weeks or more can bring the cost to an unreasonable amount. Additionally, most of these dogs have attended Burning

Man in the past and their companion people are fully aware of their dogs' needs and are competent to take care of them. As always, the companion person of a dog is responsible for picking up poop (dog poop) and ensuring proper care of the animal in the desert.

Making sure that our core staff members are good dog people is fairly easy. Trying to ensure the same of thousands of unknown participants is impossible.

If any dog or cat (there are rumors of two felines being on the playa this year) should be lost or found, or there is an animal emergency, report it to Playa Info. Ask them to radio PlayaFrog.

