



Jen DeNike and Damien Echols, 777  
September 10 - October 15, 2017  
Opening Reception, Sunday, September 10, 7-9pm

*"I believe in magick, I believe in you"*  
-Jen DeNike

*"Magicians have catalogued and explored ten different levels of what is known as reality, and then produced a map of this terrain. That map now goes by the name of the Tree of Life. Magicians also studied and mapped out the path through these levels of reality that divine energy takes as it manifests on the physical plane, and that path has been configured to have the numerological value of 777."*  
-Damien Echols

From September 10 - October 15, 2017, PARTICIPANT INC is pleased to present 777, a two-person exhibition by New York-based artists Jen DeNike and Damien Echols. Seven discreet site-specific installations evolved and are mapped according to the *Tree of Life* drawing by Echols, including individual artworks by each artist as well as collaborative, interactive, and time-based work. Seven vinyl vector drawings of red sigils derived from this drawing float on the walls, connecting the passage through the Tree of Life realms of Kether, Binah, Chochma, Geburah, Chesed, Hod, and Netzach. Central to the exhibition is a large-scale handmade tent, which the artists will inhabit for one-on-one encounters with the tarot. As well, a collection of collaged books from the their library will be available for study inside. A series by DeNike of silent video works form two pillars, a gateway of initiation outside the tent, depicting her and Echols in meditative states. A third single-channel video features Participant Director Lia Gangitano walking in and out of frame repeatedly in a ritual act of cyclic motion - she becomes the Chariot Card in the tarot, moving not in a direct line but rather a circular motion in time.

DeNike, in collaboration with sound artist **Scott Haggart**, incorporated reel-to-reel location recordings of the East River and Hudson River, which were then processed and manipulated into a final two-channel composition sound work. East and West specific markers in the psychogeography of New York are also important in the performative workings of elemental and ritual magick.

The space of the exhibition functions like a sanctuary, an environment scripted for performative reflection. A foundational triangle of three portraits of DeNike, Echols, and Gangitano were made in collaboration with artist **Lary 7**. Using a 19<sup>th</sup> century large format 8x10 film camera, seven additional portrait sittings were conducted in the gallery with past and present collaborators important to the artists. The film was hand printed by DeNike as silver gelatin photographs.

In the center of the gallery, another drawing by Echols, *777*, becomes a shrine and the final site where visitors can leave remnants of inspiration that will evolve over the course of the exhibition.

Workshops on magick will take place at the gallery during the run of the exhibition.

Meeting in 2008 while Echols was serving an 18-year prison sentence for a crime he did not commit, the two artists first collaborated on the installation of a text piece called *Living Ferociously*, curated by Jenny Schlenzka for RedLine, Denver in 2008; followed by a collaborative installation and meditative performance curated by Elizabeth Lovero *Tzaphkiel*, 2010 at Wallspace Gallery, New York that centered on the release of Echols from death row via a seven day water fast by DeNike. Eighteen years old at the time of his conviction in 1994, Echols was released in 2011, he and DeNike have since conducted magick workshops as co-mentors, produced collaborative works, and worked together toward this exhibition, their first major collaborative solo exhibition.

**Jen DeNike** is an artist and director drawing on a legacy of film, literature, and choreography in video, photographic, and performative installation works. Since receiving her MFA from Bard College, she has exhibited internationally including The Bombay Beach Biennale, California; Julia Stoshek Collection; Eastman House; 54th Venice Biennale; Garage Projects Moscow; Palais de Tokyo; MOMA PS1; KW Berlin; Museum of Modern Art; Zendai Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai; MOCA Toronto; MACRO ROMA; and Tensta Konsthall. Commissioned projects and performances include Creative Time, LAND Los Angeles Nomadic Division, Miami Art Basel Art Public, Performa Biennial, and PopRally MoMA. She has studied ritual magick and the tarot for over ten years. She lives in New York and is currently working on a new short film about a gang of sorceress in a post apocalyptic landscape who conjure a narwhal.

**Damien Echols** is an artist and *New York Times* bestselling author. He has been a practitioner of ceremonial Magick for over twenty years and leads classes on Magick and tarot readings. He spent over eighteen years on death row in Arkansas for a crime he didn't commit before gaining his freedom in 2011. During his time in prison he was ordained into the Rinzai Zen tradition of Japanese Buddhism. His artwork consists of glyphs, sigils, and symbols designed to bypass the conscious mind and speak directly to the subconscious. He uses a combination of traditional ceremonial Magick techniques combined with his own alphabet/code to break down concepts and scenarios into abstract designs. His next book, *High Magick*, will be released in September 2018. He lives in New York with his wife Lorri Davis and their three cats.



Council on the Arts



The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts



National Endowment for the Arts



Community-Driven



PARTICIPANT INC's exhibitions are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

Archiving and documentation projects are supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Our programs are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

PARTICIPANT INC receives generous support from the Ames Family Foundation; Michael Asher Foundation; The Blessing Way Foundation; The Greenwich Collection Ltd.; Harpo Foundation; Marta Heflin Foundation; The Ruth Ivor Foundation; Lambent Foundation; The Page & Otto Marx Foundation; Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; FRIENDS of PARTICIPANT INC; numerous individuals; and Materials for the Arts, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs/NYC Department of Sanitation/NYC Dept. of Education. PARTICIPANT INC is W.A.G.E. Certified and a member of Common Practice New York (CPNY).

PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street, between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets on the LES, ground floor, wheelchair accessible. Subway: F to Second Avenue, Allen Street exit; or JMZ to Essex/Delancey. [participantinc.org](http://participantinc.org)