

## Emma Cocker interview

**EC:** This idea of where you place or position yourself is interesting – I wonder whether your role is to operate as a catalyst that brings these different positions into dialogue? Your work seems then to be less about locating yourself in one position but more about attempting to keep the two possibilities in dialogue? As a consequence, your position appears somewhat unstable?

**BJ:** I think it is. I hope that the experience feels difficult or uncomfortable. The idea of questioning your own beliefs or systems of belief is very important. I don't want to find a position of stability.

**EC:** I am interested in the slippage between character and self in your work, the fray that occurs when someone who is performing a particular role or operating in an official capacity *gives* to reveal a sense of the individual therein. In the work, *The Symbol* (filmed during your residency at Banff), the shaman seems to try to turn the tables a little and interrogate you. However, he does this through the voices of others; his own doubts and questions about your project become ventriloquised through the voices of the spirits that he is purporting to

mediate. There is this slippage again between different voices or personae. In your video works, you also appear to shift between positions rather than remaining static or even neutral?

**BJ:** Yes, the way I work is obviously very different to the neutrality of a documentary filmmaker. I don't want it to have this investigative or journalistic edge to it – my expressions are important. It is important that my role mirrors the individuals that I am filming. Their roles are multiple and so are mine. Both are unstable.

**EC:** In the work, you and the shaman appear to be testing each other's limits. There is a feeling of circling, a sense of tension or a feeling of working each other out. Both of you are required to suspend certain judgments – there is a sense that you both have questions or reservations about each other's practice. There is a line that could very easily be crossed – a spell that needs to be maintained. It seems as though both of you are trying to test a limit without breaking it.



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