Announcing Woman Shaman: the Ancients

A new video by Max Dashú reveals the rich cultural record of medicine women, oracles, healers, trance-dancers, shapeshifters, drummers, and dreamers around the world. This visually stunning global survey shows female shamans in rock murals, sculpture, codices, bronzes, and ceramics, with well-researched commentary and music. Two discs, 89 minutes each. View trailer at http://www.suppressedhistories.net/

This unprecedented study of ancient female shamans overturns the presumption that archaic shamanism was a masculine preserve. Max Dashu retrieves archaeological images out of obscurity to reveal a rich female past. Women lead ceremony in rock art of the Sahara, southern Africa, Azerbaijan, Spain, and Baja California. They dance with tigers on Indus seals, with serpents on Iranian ones. They are shown in ecstatic ceremonies in Aztec codices, Chinese bronzes, and Cretan art. Female shape-shifters manifest walrus tusks in Nunavut, horns in Libya; ceramic sculptures in Ecuador, Peru, Nicaragua, show them shape-shifting into snakes, owls, deer.

The video has chapters on invocation, sacred dance, drums, entheogens, shamanic ight; serpents, animal spirits, and goddesses with shamanic aspects; ritual staffs, rattles, fans and mirrors. In her discussion of the images, Dashœ raises issues such as ambiguity in interpretation (shaman, ancestor, or deity? female, male, or ambiguous?) and multivalent symbolism (what do all those serpents mean?). She discusses problems of naming and cultural speci city, and calls attention to recurrent trans-cultural patterns. Ancient representations of divination, laying on of hands, staff dancers, regalia, paleo-lithic shamans and dei ed adepts are augmented by an evocative musical underscore.

With archival world music from Smithsonian Folkways, and Flute by Cynth; Luisah Teish; Yolanda Martinez; Layne Redmond; Maryam Akhondy; Tiokasin Ghosthorse; Suzanne Teng; Viviana GuzmÆn; Ensemble Pachamama, Mary Sherhart; Anawak; and more musicians.

"Then Miriam the prophetess took the drum in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing."