**Alex Grey 1953-**

**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex\_Grey**

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**Alex Grey** (born November 29, 1953) is an [American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) [artist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artist) specializing in [spiritual](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirituality) and [psychedelic art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychedelic_art) (or [visionary art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visionary_art)) that is sometimes associated with the [New Age](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Age) movement. Grey is a [Vajrayana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajrayana) practitioner. His body of work spans a variety of forms including [performance art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance_art), [process art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Process_art), [installation art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Installation_art), [sculpture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sculpture), [visionary art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visionary_art), and [painting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painting). Grey is a member of the [Integral Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integral_Institute). He is also on the board of advisors for the [Center for Cognitive Liberty and Ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Center_for_Cognitive_Liberty_and_Ethics), and is the Chair of Wisdom University's Sacred Art Department. He and his wife Allyson Grey are the co-founders of [CoSM, Chapel of Sacred Mirrors](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=CoSM,_Chapel_of_Sacred_Mirrors&action=edit&redlink=1), a non-profit church supporting Visionary Culture in Wappinger, New York.

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BiographyGrey was born Alex Velzy in [Columbus, Ohio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbus%2C_Ohio) on November 29, 1953, the middle child of a middle-class couple. His father was a [graphic designer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_designer) and encouraged his son's drawing ability. Young Alex would collect insects and dead animals from the suburban neighborhood and bury them in the back yard. The themes of death and transcendence weave throughout his artworks, from the earliest drawings to later performances, paintings and sculpture. He went to the [Columbus College of Art and Design](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbus_College_of_Art_and_Design) for two years (1971–73), then dropped out and painted billboards in Ohio for a year (1973–74). Grey then attended the [School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_of_the_Museum_of_Fine_Arts%2C_Boston) for one year, to study with the conceptual artist, [Jay Jaroslav](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jay_Jaroslav&action=edit&redlink=1).At the Boston Museum School he met his wife, the artist Allyson Rymland Grey.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_note-MillerSFChron-0) During this period he had a series of [entheogenically](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entheogen) induced mystical experiences that transformed his [agnostic existentialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnostic_existentialism) to a radical [transcendentalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendentalism). The Grey couple would trip together on [LSD](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LSD). Alex then spent five years at [Harvard Medical School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_Medical_School) working in the Anatomy department studying the body and preparing cadavers for dissection. He also worked at Harvard's department of Mind/Body Medicine with Dr. [Herbert Benson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Benson) and Dr. Joan Borysenko, conducting scientific experiments to investigate subtle healing energies. Alex's anatomical training prepared him for painting the Sacred Mirrors (explained below) and for doing medical illustration. When doctors saw his Sacred Mirrors, they asked him to do illustration work. Grey was an instructor in Artistic Anatomy and Figure Sculpture for ten years at [New York University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_University), and now teaches courses in Visionary Art with Allyson at The Open Center in New York City;[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_note-1) [Naropa University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naropa_University) in Boulder, Colorado; the California Institute of Integral Studies and the [Omega Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omega_Institute) in Rhinebeck, New York.In 1972 Grey began a series of art actions that bear resemblance to [rites of passage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rite_of_passage), in that they present stages of a developing psyche. The approximately fifty performance rites, conducted over the last thirty years, move through transformations from an egocentric to more sociocentric and increasingly worldcentric and theocentric identity. The most recent performance was WorldSpirit, a spoken word and musical collaboration with [Kenji Williams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenji_Williams) which was released in 2004 as a DVD.Grey's unique series of 21 life-sized paintings, the [Sacred Mirrors](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Sacred_Mirrors&action=edit&redlink=1) (soon to be on display at the [Chapel of Sacred Mirrors](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chapel_of_Sacred_Mirrors&action=edit&redlink=1) in Wappinger, NY), takes the viewer on a journey toward their own divine nature by examining, in detail, the body, mind, and spirit. The Sacred Mirrors present the physical and subtle anatomy of an individual in the context of cosmic, biological and technological evolution. Begun in 1979, the series took a period of ten years to complete. It was during this period that he developed his depictions of the human body that "[x-ray](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X-ray)" the multiple layers of reality, and reveal the interplay of anatomical and spiritual forces. After painting the Sacred Mirrors, he applied this multidimensional perspective to such archetypal human experiences as praying, meditation, kissing, copulating, pregnancy, birth, nursing and dying. Grey’s recent work has explored the subject of consciousness from the perspective of "universal beings" whose bodies are grids of fire, eyes and infinite galactic swirls.Renowned healers [Olga Worral](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Olga_Worral&action=edit&redlink=1) and [Rosalyn Bruyere](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rosalyn_Bruyere&action=edit&redlink=1) have expressed appreciation for the skillful portrayal of clairvoyant vision in his paintings of translucent glowing bodies. Grey's paintings have been featured in venues as diverse as the album art of [Tool](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tool_%28band%29), [The String Cheese Incident](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_String_Cheese_Incident), [Meshuggah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meshuggah), the [Beastie Boys](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beastie_Boys) and [Nirvana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nirvana_%28band%29), [Newsweek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newsweek) magazine, the [Discovery Channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discovery_Channel), [Rave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rave) flyers and sheets of blotter acid. His work has been exhibited worldwide, including [Feature Inc.](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Feature_Inc.&action=edit&redlink=1), [Tibet House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet_House), [Stux Gallery](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stux_Gallery&action=edit&redlink=1), [P.S. 1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MoMA_PS1), [The Outsider Art Fair](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Outsider_Art_Fair&action=edit&redlink=1) and the [New Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Museum) in NYC, the [Grand Palais](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Palais) in Paris, the [Sao Paulo Biennial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sao_Paulo_Biennial) in Brazil. Alex has been a keynote speaker at conferences all over the world including Tokyo, Amsterdam, Basel, Barcelona and Manaus. The international psychedelic community has embraced Grey as an important mapmaker and spokesman for the visionary realm.A large installation called Heart Net by Alex and his wife, Allyson, was displayed at Baltimore's [American Visionary Art Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Visionary_Art_Museum) in 1998-99. A mid-career retrospective of Grey's works was exhibited at the [Museum of Contemporary Art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_Contemporary_Art_San_Diego), San Diego in 1999. The large format art book, *Sacred Mirrors: The Visionary Art of Alex Grey* has been translated into five languages and has sold over one hundred thousand copies, unusual for an art book. His inspirational book, The Mission of Art, traces the evolution of human consciousness through art history, exploring the role of an artist's intention and conscience, and reflecting on the creative process as a spiritual path.*Transfigurations* is Alex's second large-format monograph, containing over 300 color and black & white images of his work. [Sounds True](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sounds_True) has released *The Visionary Artist*, a CD of Grey's reflections on art as a spiritual practice. *ARTmind* is the artist's recent video exploring the healing potential of Sacred Art. Grey co-edited the book, *Zig Zag Zen: Buddhism and Psychedelics* (Chronicle Books, 2002). In 2004 Grey’s VISIONS boxed set containing a portfolio of new works and *Sacred Mirrors* and *Transfigurations*, his collected works. The [Chapel of Sacred Mirrors](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chapel_of_Sacred_Mirrors&action=edit&redlink=1), CoSM, a long-term exhibition of fifty works of transformative art by Grey opened in the Fall of 2004 in New York City and relocated to its present Hudson Valley location some years later. He lives in New York City with his wife, painter [Allyson Grey](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Allyson_Grey&action=edit&redlink=1), and their daughter, actress [Zena Grey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zena_Grey).Grey was featured in the 2006 film *Entheogen: Awakening the Divine Within*, a documentary about rediscovering an [enchanted](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disenchantment) cosmos in the modern world.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_note-2)PaintingsGrey’s paintings can be described as a blend of [sacred](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_art), [visionary art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visionary_art) and [postmodern art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postmodern_art). He is best known for his paintings of glowing anatomical human bodies, images that “x-ray” the multiple layers of reality. His art is a complex integration of body, mind, and spirit. The Sacred Mirrors, a life-sized series of 21 paintings, took 10 years to complete, and examines in detail the physical and metaphysical anatomy of the individual. "The inner body is meticulously rendered - not just anatomically precise but crystalline in its clarity"[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_note-Kuspit2000-3). Many of his paintings include detailed representations of the [skeleton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skeleton), [nervous system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nervous_system), [cardiovascular system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardiovascular_system), and [lymphatic system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lymphatic_system). Grey applies this multidimensional perspective to paint the universal human experience. His figures are shown in positions such as praying, meditating, kissing, copulating, pregnancy, birth and death. His work incorporates many religious symbols, including [auras](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aura_%28paranormal%29), [chakras](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chakras), and [icons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icon) with [geometric](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geometry) [shapes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shape) and [tessellations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tessellation) in [natural](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature), [industrial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrialisation), and [multicultural](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multicultural) situations. Grey’s paintings are permeated with an intense and subtle light that is rare in art history. “It is the light that is sublime in Grey’s oeuvre - which is the most important innovation in religious light since the Baroque - and that makes the mundane beings in them seem sublime, in every realistic detail of their exquisite being”.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_note-Kuspit2000-3)**Philosophy**

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| [**Integral Theory**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integral_movement) |
| **Integral theorists:** * [Clare Graves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clare_Graves)
* [Don Beck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Beck_%28management_consultant%29)
* [Ken Wilber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_Wilber)
 |
| **Integral themes:** * [AQAL](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AQAL)
* [Integral ecology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integral_ecology)
* [Integral politics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integral_politics)
* [Integral psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integral_psychology)
 |
| **Influences on integral theory:** * [James Mark Baldwin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Mark_Baldwin)
* [Jean Gebser](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Gebser)
* [Erich Jantsch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich_Jantsch)
* [Rupert Sheldrake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rupert_Sheldrake)
 |
| **Integral artists:** * **Alex Grey**
* [Stuart Davis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stuart_Davis_%28musician%29)

**Integral organizations:*** [Integral Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integral_Institute)

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* [talk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template_talk%3AIntegral_theory)
* [edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:Integral_theory&action=edit)
 |

Grey has also made his own contribution to the [philosophy of art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_art) in his book *The Mission of Art* (1998). Therein, he promotes the possibility of the [mystical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysticism) potential of art: he argues that the process of artistic creation can (and should) play a role in the enlightenment of the artist. For him, the process of artistic creation holds the potential of transcending the limitations of the mind and more fully expressing the divine spirit. He also believes that art can induce within the viewer an elevated state wherein spiritual states of being are attained.In an interview with [Ken Wilber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_Wilber) for [*Integral Naked*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integral_Naked), Grey described an experience of [shared hallucination](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shared_hallucination) between himself and his wife, which led him to believe in [spirituality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirituality) and [spiritual practice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_practice).**Reception**Painting and music groupsGrey's artwork has often been used by music groups on their album covers.* An album of [David Byrne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Byrne_%28musician%29) remixes called *Visible Man* featured Grey's artwork.
* [Michael Hedges](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Hedges)'s album *Torched* features one of Grey's "Holy Fire" paintings on the cover.
* The liner notes for the [Nirvana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nirvana_%28band%29) album [*In Utero*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_Utero_%28album%29) included a reproduction of Grey's painting *Muscle System (Pregnant Woman)* among a series of photographs of the band.
* The cover of [The String Cheese Incident](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_String_Cheese_Incident)'s album [*Untying the Not*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Untying_the_Not) features Grey's work *Cosmic Elf*, commissioned specifically for the album.
* Hip-hop group the [Beastie Boys](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beastie_Boys) featured Grey's "Gaia" painting as well as his "Vision Crystal" image inside the booklet of their album [*Ill Communication*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ill_Communication).
* The [progressive rock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive_rock) band [Tool](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tool_%28band%29) has featured Grey's artwork as album artwork for their album [*Lateralus*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lateralus). He also executed the stage design for Tool for the associated tour that included massive reproductions of the album artwork as well as provide the artwork for the 2006 Tool album [*10,000 Days*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/10%2C000_Days) and the computer-generated graphics for the video of the single "[Vicarious](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vicarious_%28Tool_song%29)". Tool also used a few paintings from Alex on their 2007 tour of Europe, Asia, and North America.
* In 2004 a live multimedia performance was recorded as a DVD titled *Worldspirit* - featuring the animated artwork and live spoken word of Alex Grey, coupled with the project direction and live music of Kenji Williams.
* The alleged mystical properties of Grey's artwork are discussed in [Stuart Davis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stuart_Davis_%28musician%29)' 2006 DVD *Between the Music*.
* DJ/Producer [Bassnectar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bassnectar) has used Alex Grey's artwork for multiple album covers.
* In 2008 and 2009, [TELESMA](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=TELESMA&action=edit&redlink=1) performed Winter Solstice concerts at which Alex and Allyson Grey appeared on stage and painted new original pieces. A DVD of their first collaborative Winter Solstice concert with [TELESMA](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=TELESMA&action=edit&redlink=1) called *Hearing Vision's LIVE* was released in June 2010. On December 18, 2010, Alex and Allyson Grey again "live painted" new original pieces with [TELESMA](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=TELESMA&action=edit&redlink=1) during the Chapel of Sacred Mirrors (CoSM) Full Moon Solstice Celebration.

In the mediaGrey's artwork has been featured on the cover of [*Sub Rosa*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sub_Rosa), [*Newsweek*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newsweek), [*High Times*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Times), [*Shaman's Drum*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaman%27s_Drum), [*Shambhala Sun*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shambhala_Sun), [*Juxtapoz*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juxtapoz), *Vision*, [*Gnosis*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosis) and [*The Healing Power of Neurofeedback: The Revolutionary LENS Technique for Restoring Optimal Brain Function*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Healing_Power_of_Neurofeedback:_The_Revolutionary_LENS_Technique_for_Restoring_Optimal_Brain_Function&action=edit&redlink=1).The [Discovery Channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discovery_Channel) included Grey in a feature on art and creativity in [altered states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altered_states_of_consciousness).The [Viking Youth Power Hour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viking_Youth_Power_Hour) [interviewed Alex & Allyson Grey](http://www.thefeedlot.org/vikingyouth/show_show.php?show=68&x=9&y=16) about the role of [sacred art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_art), the holy shenanigans of [Burning Man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burning_Man), and the development of his process.Grey's work and his [Chapel of Sacred Mirrors](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chapel_of_Sacred_Mirrors&action=edit&redlink=1) gallery in New York City are featured in a 2006 DVD release *CoSM The Movie*, directed by Nick Krasnic.Grey talks about his personal philosophy in the 2009 film *Cognition Factor*.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_note-4)In [*Variable Star*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variable_Star), a science fiction novel written by [Spider Robinson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spider_Robinson) based on a story outline by [Robert A. Heinlein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_A._Heinlein), Robinson devotes several pages to his protagonist's discovery of Grey's *Sacred Mirrors* and *Progress of the Soul* series, and to using them to enhance meditation.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_note-robinson-5)Collections* *Transfigurations*
* *Visions*, 2003, a 2,000-copy limited edition collection of Grey's two hardcover books and a set of prints, all in an illustrated wooden case which folds out into an 'altar'

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* 2001 - *Transfigurations* (Alex Grey) ([Inner Traditions - Bear & Company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_Traditions_-_Bear_%26_Company)) [ISBN 0-89281-851-4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0892818514)
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* 2008 - *Art Psalms*

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	2. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_ref-1) [[1]](http://www.opencenter.org)
	3. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_ref-2) <http://www.entheogen.tv/bios.php>
	4. ^ [***a***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_ref-Kuspit2000_3-0) [***b***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_ref-Kuspit2000_3-1) Donald Kuspit (2000). [*Alex Grey's Mysticism*](http://books.google.com/books?id=x3WibfHqGZUC&pg=PA251&lpg=PA251&dq=alex+grey%27s+mysticism).
	5. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_ref-4) <http://www.cognitionfactor.net/the_cast/Alex_Grey.aspx>
	6. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Grey#cite_ref-robinson_5-0) [Heinlein, Robert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_A._Heinlein); [Spider Robinson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spider_Robinson) (September 2006). *Variable Star* (1st edition ed.). New York: Tom Doherty Associates. pp. 170–173. [ISBN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number) [0-7653-1312-X](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0-7653-1312-X).
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