

# Cortezuma

By Jay Critchleys

The Something, The Possible, 2014  
UC Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Archive

If the Pied Piper were blind would you follow him? If he were jabbing a long-handled money collection basket at you, would you donate? If you saw him lying on the floor rhythmically and endlessly beating a tambourine, would you care?

Cortezuma confronts us with these existential questions as we wander into his unsteady path, wobbling on stilettos, costumed in silver, maybe with an electric guitar dangling off his neck like a toy-of-a-necklace he won't let go of, and refuses to respect. Not to worry, others have joined this merry prankster with boom boxes, a saxophone, voice callings and percussive language. Is it all hopeless or hopeful - calling up the souls of Conquistador Cortes or Aztec Chief Moctezuma in incantations and writhing reminiscent of the Divine Comedy or altered states of peeing.

Writhe on! Writhe on, Cortezuma!

Lead us to the forgotten stream to reclaim our lost scents, to cleanse us at the watering hole of our deep past. You tendril to the sweet flowers of springtime, to the ancient dirt and rock and stone and bones of our ancestors, to the blowing North winds and Milky Ways of the Great Heifer in the sky.

Textify! Textify!

○ Breaker of Bones. ○ Swallower of Shades. ○ He-who-is-Blood who came forth from the place of slaughter, you have not done grain-profiteering. You have not teleported nonversational Rare Earth staph infections. You see the chaos, and we honor your mobile soul, we honor the temple of millions of years, where the earth devours that which has come forth from thee. Monster (beast), lie down, glide away.

Have we lost our desire for eternity?