

# LITURGY OF SACRED CIRCUITS

MATHIAS WESTBROOK

*Liturgy of Sacred Circuits* is a ritualistic meditation on the spiritual implications of computer-generated randomness and the artifacts, minerals and algorithms that symbolically activate it. At the core of the ritual is a live/real-time rendered game world, as the computer takes on the role of the player during the course of the exhibition. This is framed by an intertwined installation of sculpture, prints and found objects. Imagery found throughout the works incorporate references from a range of occult and spiritual concepts, namely the framework and symbolism of chaos magick (✱) and a Western historical practice of *divination*: “the practice of seeking knowledge of the future or the unknown by supernatural means.”

In the simulated game, referred to as *Infinite Wetlands*, the ‘player’ finds themselves in a procedurally generated swampy ecosystem interwoven with representations of contemporary technology. A vast complex ecosystem of root networks, water and animal life becomes strangely analogous to the intricateness of the wires and hardware that govern our electronic devices. Historically speaking, wetland biomes are generally viewed as quintessential hostile places to develop human infrastructure and were associated with witchcraft, folklore and superstition in more archaic times as a result.

In terms of the game’s autonomy, the world is run entirely on the whim of generated pseudo-randomness. The environment itself is constantly in a cycle of randomised regeneration. From the curvature of the terrain to the distribution of objects throughout the area, almost everything in the game’s logic is algorithmically decided from pseudo-random noise. Even the movements of the simulated player character is devoid of any human influence. If the player manages to exit the play area by stumbling off the edge of the map, the player will simply find themselves falling into another layer of freshly generated environment.

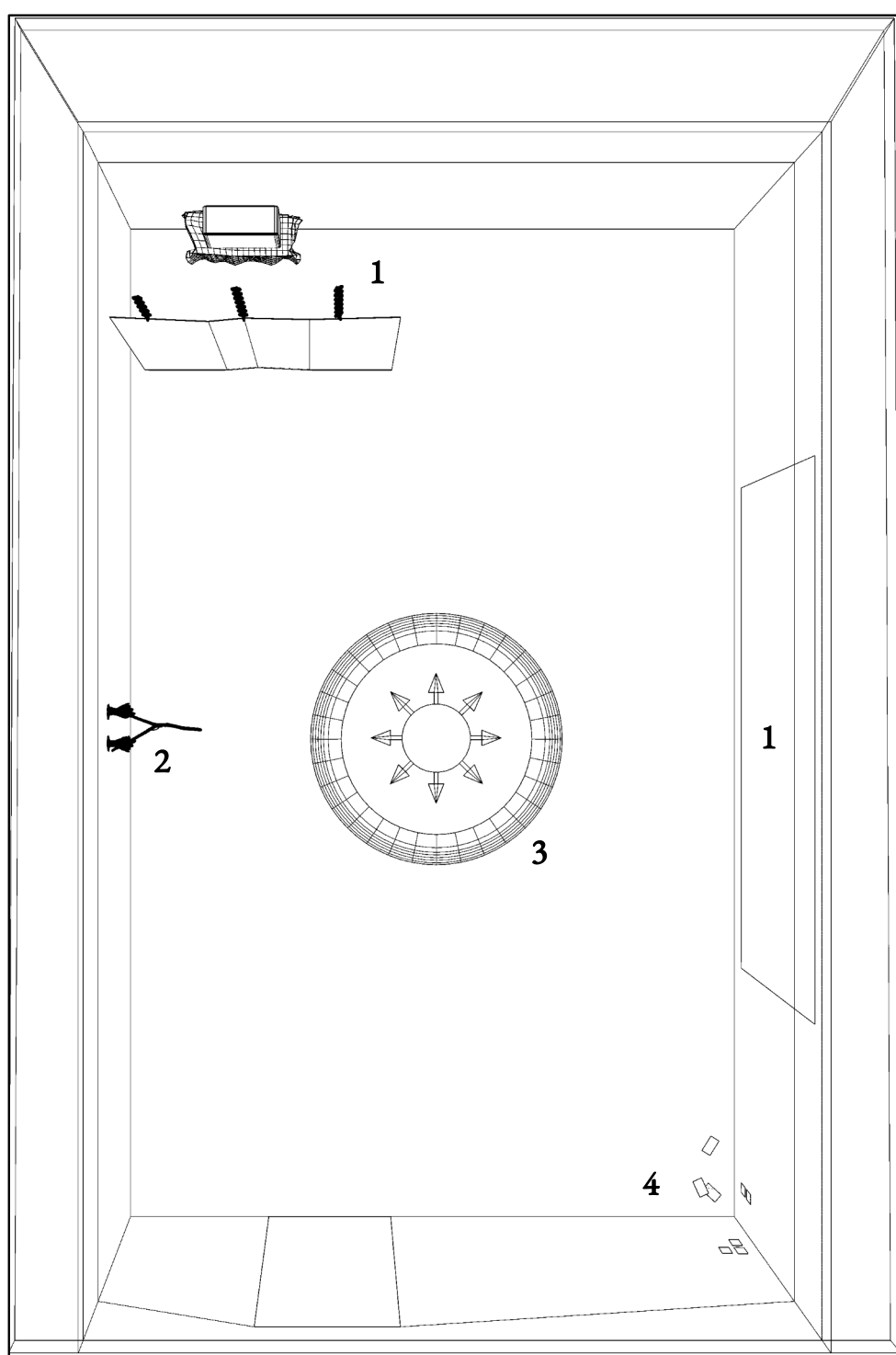
The ‘pseudoness’ of the pseudo-random stems from the computer’s inability to provide “true” random numbers. Instead it often relies on a convoluted algorithm that returns a value based on the exact microsecond of the computer’s internal clock, a transmutational concept symbolically represented in the eternal day/night loop of *Infinite Wetlands*. For most use cases, this algorithm is a sufficient representation of the random.

In the *liturgy* however, the pseudo-random becomes as legitimate a source of divine message as the drawing of the tarot card, the reading of sheep’s liver or the spontaneous occurrence of miracles. In the tradition of chaos magick, as outlined by occultist writer Phil Hines, we are taught that ritualistic and spiritual power can come from any source, even those we know and believe to be *entirely fictional*.

Directly across from the projected image is the sculptural installation *Stationary Dowsing*. This depicts the divinational method of accessing the aforementioned pseudo-randomness; the technological activation of a traditional dowsing rod. This originally ancient tool is a mere conventional Y-shaped twig believed to be capable of locating subterranean water and rare minerals by reacting to supposed “electromagnetic vibrations.” Attached to this dowsing rod, is the wired instalment of small PCB-antennas extracted from the body of a dead Wi-Fi router. This sculpture also illustrates the disembodied first-person perspective plucked out of the digital realm of the opposing projected game work.

In between these two focal points, lies a central floor marking with a circular arrangement of crystalized salt and discarded electronics: *The Circle of Circuitry*. This represents a symbolic boundary between the self, the game and the outside world.

*Liturgy of Sacred Circuits* is also contextualised as part of a larger multimedia worldbuilding project by Mathias Westbrook. The intention is to explore a more speculative evolved state of computerised algorithms and the resulting emerging mythos replacing conventional discourse. This is primarily worked through archetypal characters that represent different esoteric lenses and attitudes towards algorithmic spirituality. *Liturgy of Sacred Circuits* invokes the aspect of *The Pseudo-Sorcerer*: a hermitical character dedicated to using divination as a means to understand and be guided by ‘the algorithm’ - an immaterial ecosystem it believes to be so complex and beyond human understanding, that it must be seen through a pseudo-spiritual lens.



### 1. 'Infinite Wetlands'

Video game playing on stationary PC, single-channel projection with sound, custom-printed shower curtain (altered *Flammarion engraving*, unknown artist, est. 1888), synthetic quilt, metal chains

3D assets & lead programming:

Mathias Westbrook

Assistant programming:

DeepSeek

Soundscape & audio FX:

Freesound.org

Soundly

### 2. 'Stationary Dowsing'

Wooden dowsing rod, PLA 3D-print, acrylic model paint, copper cables, PCB-antenna

### 3. 'Circle of Circuitry'

Crystal salt, self-adhesive foil, various electronic components

### 4. 'A Small Assortment of Major and Minor Arcana'

Digital renderings printed on metallic cardstock