



14. HALL OF MIRRORS



The next morning, the ritual fire from *Use a Hammer* is a pile of ash and melted mirrors. The weather has shifted; the wind has picked up; summer is ending.

Using a steel bucket and a larger steel pail, I gather up every piece of melted mirror from the dewy grass.

That evening, I hoist the pail of broken glass into the hayloft of the old **High Acres Farm** barn, where I find a collection of small votive candles forming a “**golden rectangle**” twenty-seven feet long. Within the candle perimeter, there is a piece of red yarn stretched between four steel nails, drawing out a smaller rectangular space on the floor, itself a golden rectangle as well. The twin sets of halogen work lights from *Use a Hammer* are watching.

With great care, I place each piece of broken fired mirror within the bounds of the yarn, forming a fractured organic mosaic, whose structure comes into being with the addition of each new piece of glass.

This mosaic of mirrors “**transcends and includes**” all of the former identities. It doesn’t reject or repress them, but integrates them into a new and larger wholeness that is no longer constrained by the old definitions.

I work all night until dawn. As the lights go dark, the camera glides over the space as I lay on the floor, with the completed mosaic emerging from my head like some kind of thought bubble from a childhood cartoon — a new wholeness constructed from all of the fragments.

In the days that followed, I developed a strange inflammation of my tongue, lips, and mouth, where my taste buds became painfully swollen. Perhaps it was the dust from the barn, or perhaps it was the many outdated identities finally leaving my body.

I didn’t know it at the time, but this mosaic of broken mirrors would end up remaining in that very place for the next six years — witnessing all the many changes that were about to unfold on the land. In this way, the mirrors were to become like batteries, absorbing the energy of the ritual work that was yet to come.

My former painting teacher at **Deerfield Academy**, **Tim Engelland**, once engraved these words of **Florida Scott-Maxwell** into one of his sculptures:

You need only claim the events of your life to make yourself yours. When you truly possess all you have been and done... you are fierce with reality.

Performed in 2015 — Duration 5:25

