ARTIST STATEMENT — SEÁN HANNAN (2026)

At the heart of my practice is a compulsion to echo the past into the future. I don't preserve history as static memory. I let its forgotten voices, obscured rituals, and shadowed myths reverberate through contemporary and emerging technologies. I am drawn to the subliminal, the unseen, and the secretive: realms where truth is less a fixed point and more a signal, distorted, buried, or delayed, waiting to be re-amplified.

My early work inhabited digital subcultures rich with ambiguity: political conspiracies, whistleblower archives, esoteric technologies, and the soft mythologies born from unstable networks. I gathered leaked documents, speculative theories, and digital detritus as materials that spoke to how dominant media, belief systems, and collective memory shape the world we accept as real.

Over time, my focus shifted from uncovering hidden truths to charting truth's gradual disappearance. Artificial intelligence now plays a central role in this process. I use it to construct what I think of as temporal vessels, artworks that operate across time, engaging the future while resonating with echoes of the past. These works invite memory to ripple forward through unstable tools and coded systems that distort as much as they reveal. In autonomous installations, AI generates and regenerates material without my intervention, producing work that evolves beyond my authorship. In live performance, AI systems become co-performers, responding to human presence in real time, not simulating understanding but producing uncanny collisions between machine logic and lived experience.

My Irish-Dutch identity runs through these investigations. Shaped by Irish oral traditions, layered histories, and a diasporic perspective on cultural continuity, I don't use AI to simulate human memory. I collaborate with it in a mutual process of distortion and reimagining, where machine logic calls forth the strange rhythms of lost knowledge and submerged traditions. I bring AI into direct dialogue with ancient mourning practices, personal archives, and collective rituals, not to preserve them faithfully but to see what survives the translation.

The works I create are open frameworks shaped through encounter and dialogue. I collaborate with people from outside the traditional art world, including hackers, singers, folklorists, whistleblowers, intelligence operatives, theorists, and generative AI systems. Together we build installations and image-worlds that appear familiar on the surface but carry beneath them alternative, often contested narratives.

Medium remains secondary to resonance. I work across drawing, sound, computation, video, installation, performance, and object-making, blending antique materials with neural networks and archival remnants with imagined futures. The tools I use today may be outdated tomorrow, and the work accepts this. It exists in the present tense, addressing current conditions with current means, while acknowledging that both the technology and the cultural moment it captures are already passing.

In an era shaped by decaying truths, unstable memories, and automated voices, I treat myth and storytelling as serious tools for understanding, as valid as facts and logic. I deliberately embrace the erosion of certainty, not as failure but as a contemporary ritual through which memory may re-emerge. My interest lies not in what is objectively real, but in what still feels true enough to matter, even if only for a moment.