

ARTIST STATEMENT - SEÁN HANNAN (2025)

At the heart of my artistic practice lies a desire to echo the past into the future. I don't attempt to preserve history as static memory, but rather a way to let its forgotten voices, obscured rituals, and shadowed myths reverberate within both contemporary and emerging technologies. I am drawn to the subliminal, the unseen, and the secretive. These are realms where truth is less a fixed point and more a signal that becomes distorted, buried, or delayed, waiting to be re-amplified.

My early work inhabited digital subcultures rich with ambiguity, including political conspiracies, whistleblower archives, esoteric technologies, and the soft mythologies born from unstable networks. These spaces offered fragments such as leaked documents, speculative theories, and digital detritus. I gathered these materials as sources that could speak to how dominant media, belief systems, and collective memory shape the world we understand as real.

Over time, my focus shifted. Rather than attempting to uncover hidden truths, I became more interested in charting truth's gradual disappearance. Artificial intelligence now plays an increasingly central role in this process. I use it to construct what I think of as temporal vessels: artworks that respond across time, engaging with the future while still resonating with the echoes of the past. They invite memory to ripple forward through unstable tools and coded systems that distort as much as they reveal.

My Irish identity, shaped by oral traditions and layered histories, surfaces in these investigations. I do not use AI to simulate human memory. Rather, I collaborate with it in a mutual process of distortion and reimagining, where machine logic helps call forth the strange rhythms of lost knowledge and submerged traditions.

The works I create act as open frameworks shaped through encounter and dialogue. I often 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 may appear familiar at first glance but carry beneath the surface alternative and often contested narratives.

Medium, for me, remains secondary to resonance. I work across drawing, sound, computation, video, installation, and object-making. I blend antique materials with neural networks and merge archival remnants with imagined futures. I approach obsolescence not as a failure but as a poetic state. This allows me to create resonant hybrids and transient monuments that mark the fleeting intersections between human memory, machine logic, and collective imagination. Through these works, I aim to illuminate connections that keep the past in motion and allow it to speak again, even if only briefly.

In an era increasingly shaped by decaying truths, unstable memories, and automated voices, I treat myth and storytelling as serious tools for understanding. These are just as valid as facts and logic. Public discourse today often leans into opinion, conviction, and belief. Within that landscape, I deliberately embrace the erosion of certainty. I see it not as a failure, but as a kind of contemporary ritual through which memory may reemerge. My interest lies not in identifying what is objectively real, but in discovering what still feels true enough to matter, even for a moment.