

Lulu-journal

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“Between Subversion and Hallucination”

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Room, Room, Room (1963) by Arne Jones at Storgatan 9, Luleå. Photo: Thomas Hämén, 2018

This issue of Lulu Journal is dedicated to composer Olga Neuwirth.

This volume gathers some of the materials – texts, art works, music, performance, – as well as the authors attached to these materials, that have guided me in my research into forms of subversion in sleep and forms of dreaming that help us envision life as we would like to live it. I had occasion to collect together some of this material for the first time for the symposium “Between Subversion and Hallucination” at the Dutch Art Institute in March this year and for a series of exhibition sketches called “Sleeping with a Vengeance, Dreaming of a Life”, which opened in Athens, then Prague, then Beijing.

The subject has been with me since I stumbled upon a painting by Camille Pissarro from 1882, depicting a seemingly picturesque scene of a woman sleeping in a meadow. The impression is misleading. Read in light of the political up-

heavals in the French countryside at the time, and with the knowledge that anarchist Pissarro expressed his political sympathies in his art, the painting reveals itself as a depiction of a farm worker asleep, – and on strike.

Much has been written about the clutches of late capitalism on our sleep. In a “24/7 universe” (to use Jonathan Crary’s phrase), sleep has been turned into a resource, tied to production, consumption, warfare and biopolitics. Much less has been written about actual struggles to resist this development. Indeed, while many have noted the predicament of being simultaneously enticed to sleep less and to sleep more effectively, the recent sleep-hype delights in either regurgitating the capitalist dystopia or in exploring Morpheus’ realm, as if it were uncharted terrain.

But what does it do if we keep on representing a dystopian perspective within the framework of cognitive capitalism? Obviously, it is important

that contemporary conditions be analysed. Yet, I cannot help but notice that while some are able to capitalise on their critical activities, the agency of others, who are bearing the brunt of economic inequality, is being obscured by the concentration on capitalism's pervasiveness. Concrete labour struggles and anti-capitalist success stories seldom enter the discourse around sleep.

And what does it do, if we turn our fascination with sleep into cultural production without considering how this might still mimic the ideology of sleep-optimisation? We end up feeding the creative industries with sleep performances, sleep hotels, sleep music, sleep philosophy. Meanwhile subversion is naively considered a given, as if sleep were in and of itself some magical mechanism of freedom. As if sleep were a practice without a context. As if subversion and resistance weren't part of a struggle, an individual and political struggle.

In order to politicise the discourse around sleep, it is necessary to begin to think the social conditions from the sleeper's point of view. What, for example can dream-life tell us about living under a totalitarian regime? How can we move beyond the contradiction of sleep and wakefulness? What does it mean to fall asleep at a protest

site? Is there political subjectivity to be found in dreaming? What can we accomplish when we question the negative connotations of passivity and instead start hallucinating? Or when we start to wake up?

I would like to thank Emily Fahlén and Asrin Haidari for their trust in me and to express my utter indebtedness to all authors for their generous contributions and to Sharon Sliwinski, the editor of The Museum of Dreams, www.museumofdreams.org. The latter has proven to be a particularly inspiring resource. My gratitude belongs to my students at the DAI, who were willing to think about sleep and dreaming alongside me for several months and to Gabriëlle Schleijpen, who supported my research through an invitation to curate one of the Dutch Art Institute's infamous Roaming Assemblies (March 2018).

Ruth Noack

Ruth Noack trained as a visual artist and art historian, she has worked as author, art critic, university lecturer and exhibition maker since the 1990s.

→ *Stop the World I Want to Get Off* John Barker

We do not know enough about the history of candles and oil lamps to know how and in what way being awake – necessarily, usefully or pleasurably – was possible in the day’s hours of darkness but can assume they were limited. And yet, even before the coming of gas and more significantly electric light, from the 16th century onwards among various currents of Protestant Christianity there was a concern with mortality expressed as not losing or wasting time and associated with productivism as virtuous. It placed into doubt the unequivocal virtue of sleep as both relief and restorative let alone pleasurable. Such a concern was one of the strands of the performance piece **Stop the World I Want to Get Off** at the **Between Subversion and Hallucination** event curated by Ruth Noack in Arnhem.

In our own times, heralded by electricity and the electric light and now the 24/7 society, sleep has become an ‘issue’. On the one hand there is the macho phenomena, the justifying boast by bankers in particular of what long hours they work: Sleep is for Wimps, that kind of thing. It was a claim first celebrated by the inventor of the electric light himself, Thomas Edison. Writing in 1921 he says

“People will not only do what they like to do – they overdo it 100 per cent. Most people overeat 100 per cent, and oversleep 100 per cent, because they like it. That extra 100 per cent makes them unhealthy and inefficient. The person who sleeps eight or ten hours a night is never fully asleep and never fully awake – they have only different degrees of doze through the twenty-four hours. ... For myself I never found need of more than four or five hours’ sleep in the twenty-four. I never dream. It’s real sleep. When by chance I have taken more I wake dull and indolent. We are always hearing people talk about ‘loss of sleep’ as a calamity. They better call it loss of time, vitality and opportunities. Just to satisfy my curiosity I have gone through files of the British Medical Journal and could not find a single case reported of anybody being hurt by loss of sleep. “

The reference to inefficient is very much of that productivist ideology which in the accompanying script –performed with students at the Dutch Art

Institute – is voiced by Cotton Mather the fanatical prosecutor of ‘witches’ in the 17th century Salem, Massachusetts, dramatised by Arthur Miller in his play **The Crucible**.

Sleep is another of the thieves which make people snore away the Time that should go to work which God calls them to. Fetters of immoderate sleep.

At the same time, Edison was making his claims, a psycho-technical profession built on the 19th century notion of the ‘human motor’ developed in Europe. From a mobile army of metaphor they used the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics to create a notion of ‘fatigue’ as an intrinsic limit to production. Like all uses of natural sciences to describe social relations the notion is inherently dubious. Absorbed into the drive for ‘scientific management’, studies were made of both workers and work processes to ascertain optimum conditions for production that avoided the hazards of fatigue. There was an understanding that intellectual work and the increased division of labour would demand new qualities of attention, conscientiousness and duration of performance but they did not consider sleep, its length or quality. It was workers all over Europe, like those at the Carl Zeiss works at Jena who won demands over the length of the working day but in these neither was sleep an ‘issue’ That was first fought in Edison’s USA by the Afro-American Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters formed in 1925.

These were the porters on the sleeping cars of the railway Pullman company working in a late 19th century instance of the 24/7 society. The company’s founder, George Pullman – a standard racist of the time – thought such men were particularly suited to making beds, shining shoes, emptying spittoons, and other demeaning tasks the passengers demanded. Like steelworkers who worked the dreaded “long shift,” they were also subjected to temporal and spatial arrangements that made restful sleep impossible. A porter in 1903 estimated that the average employee got less than four hours of sleep a night; making matters worse, the company disciplined those who fell asleep at the wrong time or the wrong place with up to 30 days’ suspension. Led by future civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph, the Brotherhood highlighted connections between sleep loss and respiratory, cardiac, and mental health risks – and that “fatigue destroys efficiency and lessens productivity.”



"Sleep at work helps the enemies of the Ruling Class, 1931 – The Bolsheviks too were 'scientific management' enthusiasts"

4 It is such a functionalist argument, used strategically by the sleeping car porters, that has dominated sociological and ergonomic interest in sleep as 'an issue.' It has become entwined with concern about the kind of intellectual labour which both this writer and the Dutch Art Institute students are engaged with in which the division between work and not-work (usually called leisure or in more slimy language 'quality' time) of the old style 9-5 worker is dissolved. Especially in what are called creative industries, a situation in which one is always 'working' has been identified; in which one's very thoughts are functional to immediate or prospective projects. This phenomenon has in turn been linked to sleeplessness and burn out, though in reality burn-it is more likely to be the fate of a sewing machinist in a *maquiladora*. In the creative industries situation though, the ergonomic concern with performance is as elsewhere with avoiding such burn-out and a recognition that one of sleeps' functions is precisely making the person immobile in unprofitable parts of the day-night cycle. This fits snugly with this dominant instrumentalized view of sleep, the optimum efficiency of the individual. In our performance we looked also at the available techno-fixes for our professional creative, the sleeping pill and one of the many available eight hour sound tracks 'to suit the individual' that are conducive to sleep, be it

one type of train or another, or the many varieties of the sea lapping on the shore, available in YouTube. At the same time in the script I also wanted to catch the resentment that is commonly there amongst high-flyers of all sorts, creative or financial, of how easy it is, they assume, for the lower orders to sleep, those without the compulsion to perform. It was for this purpose that Shakespeare's King Henry V makes his speech expressing a similar sentiment to the street sleeper in *Stop the World I Want To Get Off*.

The street sleeper as the main character of the piece originated with the experienced knowledge that sleep can be a blissful escape from the non-stop nature of life; and from Ruth Noack pointing participants in *Between Subversion and Hallucination* to the poetic text of Haytham El-Wardani in which I was struck by the level of trust he describes in the act of sleeping in public: "Sleeping in public is, therefore, a declaration of faith in the random other." For the street sleeper rather than the tired worker napping on the bus home, this is a no-choice trust and, for more than most, an escape from a hard-to-bear waking-life that most of us will only experience in the earliest –however long – period of grieving over the death of a loved one. The street sleeper then has more reason than most for wanting to escape the non-stop but in the process made themselves vulnerable and it was this vulnerability that horrified those early Protestant Christians. For Cotton Mather it is "Men are asleep when they omit their guard over themselves." This self-guard I translated in the performance into the Thin Controller who "grows fat on a diet of anxieties and ambition".

There is another layer to this vulnerability. In making his boast about how little sleep he needs Edison emphasised that he never dreamed. This seems unlikely, indeed unique and reflects more that particular fear which in the text is expressed by Edmund Spenser in the first genuinely Protestant epic, his *Faerie Queene*: in sleep one is not just vulnerable to physical attack, but to being deceptively tempted. In his version dreams are externally introduced by the devil and his minions but this is a thin cover for what is really dangerous, the subconscious in which the thin controller is liable to lose control. It would I think have been invidious to create a dream for the street sleeper. Instead he is helped to sleep by a lullaby and then protected, his right to sleep inviolate.

THE PERFORMANCE

Alejandro walks across the stage with a sleeping bag in an IKEA bag also full of rags/cloth.

Through speakers the loud sounds of a city.

Alejandro walks back and forth, then takes the sleeping bag out and using the IKEA bag as a pillow gets into it.

The city sounds morph into sound of many foot-steps from speakers but amplified by other students using their feet on polythene as if walking on a wet pavement.

Alejandro eyes close and looks peaceful.

John looking down at him.

Sanne comes close to where Alejandro is lying and sings her own composition, a boat and sea lullaby

The sound of footsteps quietens and disappears.

John looks down at the sleeper again:

“Will the wearied body yield

To a fatal lullaby of wind and sea, Ah No.”

Sanne finishes the song. John turns away in disgust to a lectern where he continues.

Spoken softly as if to himself:

“In Morpheus house.

Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,

And low, where dawning day doth never peepe,

In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed,

Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black doth spread.

And more, to lulle him in his slumber soft,^o
A trickling streame from high rock tumbling
downe,
And ever-drizling raine upon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the
sowne

Of swarming Bees, did cast the goodly man in a
swowne: drowned deepe
In drowsie fit.”

In changed voice, shouting at the audience:
“Some awake yet do fall asleep again no sooner
is your back turned upon them but they lie down
to sleep again. How many are met with at a
Sermon and are startled and alarmed but before
the next opportunity are as fast asleep as ever.
Listen”

Changes voice again to soft:

“And when drownd in deadly sleepe he’s
found,
Satan to this study goes, and there amidde

His Magick bookes and artes^o of sundry
kinds,
He seekes out mighty charmes.

And forth he cald out of deepe darknesse
dred

Legions of Sprights,^o the which like little flyes
Fluttering about his ever damned hed,
Awaite whereto their service he applies,
with charmes and hidden artes,
to deceive the good man with desire and
into trust.”

In the changed voice screaming at audience:
“From a Man that is Asleep anything may be
taken away. When the Devils have lulled us
asleep they may, and may take away from our
Hearts.”

“A sinful sleep is indeed a deadly sleep; it is a
venomous and stupefying Bed of Night Shadows
whereupon men by when they sleep in sin If a
man sleeps he makes himself a prey....If asleep he
makes himself prey to all his internal and exter-
nal adversaries he lays himself open to all man-
ner of blows upon his Interest.”

He starts to move towards the sleeper again:

“Men are asleep when they omit their guard over
themselves.”

Olivia dressed brightly and moving into a posi-
tion of protecting the sleeper.

John:

“Sleep is another of the thieves which make peo-
ple snore away the time that should go to work.
Immoderate sleep. shake it off.”

He drops a metal bucket in front of Olivia near
the sleeper but the sleeper sleeps on.

Olivia points at John in accusing fashion.

John freezes.

Olivia:

“The Thin Controller grows fat on a diet of anx-
ieties. and ambition; ambivalent to comfort
and its expenses. In sleep the Thin Controller
prompts dreams only of missed appointments,
missed planes, missed ideas that had been yours
and yours alone; opportunity knocked and mis-
takenly, it was imagined there was all the time in
the world. Or rendering the dream Useful: this
is where you are going wrong; this must be dealt
with. Face up to the accumulation of what must
be dealt with. The competition, the show must
go on, the task, endless inescapable reality. The
thin controller grows fat on...”

Clementine with laptop continues without pause: (When she is in full flow, Olivia walks off stage.)
 “The project. I must. The project.. I ought. I should. . Smart. I must.. The project. Conception to completion. LSD microdose to loosen the synapses, cross the boundaries and back again. Quantum physics Face patterns merge in and out slow motion then... skewered by an arrow on a revolving target. Microdose exhausted. But I must hold on tight to the sequence, the revolving target with an eyelashed bullseye. Eyelashed bullseye opening and closing. In syncopated rhythm. Got it. Part one, conception achieved. Part Two, I can. I will. I can I should I ought. Performance. Judgment. I will. I ought. Concept Brilliant. Not a moment to be lost. Deadline. Appropriate software and lines of cocaine as required. Like now. This is good, this is very good, the concept, the face as target. Critique of marketing. Critique Needed. Of the moment. Yes, Go for it!. I ought. I should. I must. I can I will. I will see it through because it’s important, it really matters. This is a Now Thing. Absolutely of the moment Deadline. Got to keep going. Keep it fresh.. No time to waste I can. I must. I will. I can I must I will.”

John moving out of the freeze to stand by the sleeper while Clementine keeps making the movements that suggest computer work:

“How many thousands of my poorest subjects
 Are at this hour asleep!
 Why gentle sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,
 Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee
 And hushed with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,
 Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,
 Under the canopies of costly state,
 And lull’d with sound of sweetest melody?
 O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile
 In loathsome beds and leavest the kingly couch
 A watch-case or a common ‘larum bell? Canst thou,
 O partial sleep, give thy repose
 To the beggar in an hour so rude, and yet deny it
 to a king.”

John walks off.

Clementine:

“Got it, secured. Rough cut done. Concept captured. I can. I have. I will. And now a for 4 hour sleep, well deserved, then fresh for a tweak here and a tweak there, Half a pill will do the trick with sounds for relaing. 8 hours of soft rain on Youtube? Or a night train? No I’ll take the 8

hours of the sea, waves gently lapping the sands. Gently lapping for a fresh tomorrow. Wake up to its gentle sounds.”

The sound of waves on the beach.

After 30 seconds is outdone by

The sound of the city and footsteps getting louder.

Sound of the waves disappear.

Alejandro awakes. Tries to sleep again.

The sounds get louder.

John Barker is a novelist and essayist from London who in recent years has worked extensively with the visual artist Ines Doujak and presented work with her in a variety of media including performance and film at Biennale in Korea and Sao Paulo as well as at exhibitions in New York and across Europe from Riga to Barcelona with many stops in between. In 2009, LKAB discontinued the project. The hole, simply, could not be filled.

→ *Images of Sleep Protests*
with Excerpts from Olga
Neuwirth's "No More", 2009
Ruth Noack



The video is available online at <http://luleabiennial.se/en/journalen>

→ *Fragments from*
The Book of Sleep
Haytham el-Wardany

SQUANDER

History does not wait for the sleepers to wake; it is written by the wakeful alone. What, from those hours of sleep, is worth the history books taking notice of and setting down? Surplus hours of no benefit or purpose; and yet these hours do not wither and fade away like pointless superfluity but grow in number, night after night, to become a strange assemblage. Strange, because unlike other assemblages these hours take on no weight worth mentioning however numerous they become, hovering perpetually in the background to no effect, unaddressed; a neglected nook that all know and never speak of. And so, down the years, sleep remains thus, cast over the pages of history like scattered dust. It might be condensed into the form of a dream here, or there a vision, but otherwise it lives outside these pages, a spirit that haunts all that is unwritten. The response sleep gives to this distancing is repetition. Like all authentic things, sleep returns to the fray night after night, creating from repetition a law. It comes back at us every evening with all its negativity and loss and failure, its insistence on continual squandering, reasserting its affiliation with the tragedies of the past. Expelled from history, sleep neither moves things forward nor holds them back, neither produces nor accumulates, and even so it marks the line beyond which progress's arrow cannot pass. What can the subject in history do, confronted by this daily squandering? What can she do with all these hours of sleep? Reduce them as much as she can? Forget them utterly as soon as she wakes? Press them down, one atop the other, like pastry layers that she then eats? Walk among them like autumn leaves? Abandon herself to them? What to do?

REASSURED

Beyond the social as space for negotiation and struggle, for the exchange of views and dialogue, another hidden aspect emerges: the social as an arena for shared silence. Sleeping on public transport, in squares and lecture halls, at work, is a redoubled rejection of the social act, for it takes place not in the bedroom but in the traditional sites of social interaction. The sleeper at work prevents himself from working, the sleeper on the bus fails to view the roadside advertise-

ments, the sleeper in the square aborts his communication with others. Sleep taps the public sphere with its wand and transforms it from a space for negotiation and struggle into a site of silence and absence, both of which become a collective activity and not a private matter. Yet for all its social inadequacy, sleep does not transform the public sphere into a place of coldness and deliberate disregard, but—how strange!—into a site of trust and reassurance; for there, at the heart of the social disengagement created by sleep, a new trust in others can be discerned. A trust whose origin remains mysterious, for the public sleeper neither negotiates nor struggles with others, does not ally or interact, but instead surrenders himself, reveals to them his weakness, his insubstantiality, his incapacity. Sleeping in public is, therefore, a declaration of faith in the random other. The other of the public square, beside whom the sleeper lies contentedly, is not one individual but a group of strangers, a group whose members the sleeper has no desire to know but whose plurality he finds reassuring, allowing him to become, like them, a stranger.

THE DELICACY OF RADICALISM

Bodies that walk in public are primed, their veins charged with the exact quantity of tension that enables them to interact with their surroundings and deliver the appropriate responses. The radical public act requires bodies that are more highly strung, ready to confront any dangers that may bar its way. They are bodies that have entered into open conflict with the authorities for the purpose of reshaping public space. Among the many varieties of radical act, the sit-in stands apart in its extreme complexity. On the one hand, it constitutes the most extreme manifestation of the protest movement and its riskiest act, because it seizes the initiative and manufactures a new reality by “occupying” public space. On the other hand, it can only be made complete by another, deeply fragile, act, an action that is almost its antithesis: to fall asleep at the protest site. Sleeping at the sit-in is the very essence of it, the act that all participants are seeking to perform. A sit-in without protestors carpeting the ground is on shaky foundations, which is why there is always a battle to prevent sleep from taking place; once they manage to do so, the sit-in has political consequences. The act of staging a sit-in, with the clear risks it poses, only becomes radical when it denies its own nature and is replaced by an act that denies the very principle of action. Sleep is that low-energy act; it is this

“sluggishness” that has the power to meld public and private: to make the public sphere private and vice versa and thereby realize the sit-in’s objectives. The radical body, tensed and primed, unwinds and slackens; it drops its defences, reveals its weakness and frailty. Through this accumulation and contiguity of weakness and frailty, the sharing of weariness and pain and their exposure to the public, sleep becomes a source of strength and a means for change. The sleepers at a sit-in do not return singly from the field of battle. Lying side by side, they become brokers of a new reality, and their dreams the language of this reality, which they strive to decode.

THE KINGDOM OF THINGS

The room is full of its things. There is a little desk by the door and a lamp beside the bed. There is a suitcase against the wall and a flowerpot on the window frame. In the desk drawer there is a passport and a marriage certificate and, lying in the dresser drawer, a gold earring, a bracelet. A bright shirt has been carelessly tossed over the chair and abandoned on the floor is a sock inverted. We leave all this behind and are drawn towards the gulf which is called sleep. There, for a moment, time stops and we imagine that we have moved elsewhere. But as soon as we enter it we are cast back into the room itself, this time not as a presiding force but as one thing among its many, the thing which we’ve become in sleep propelled by irresistible sympathy towards the other things and seeping now, bit by bit, onto the pillow, then onto the bed, then out into the room. And just as we are transformed into things during sleep, so the things in our rooms transform into beings other than those we know. They lose their passivity and gradually return to themselves. No longer objects and implements, they are now bodies through which a secret inner motion flows. They are our things, which we resemble and which resemble us, and the deeper we fall into sleep the more we settle into these things, or they into us, or all of us together into the room. In the fraternity of sleep we do not encounter things along the lines of power but rather in the primordial matter, in the heart of its becoming. The flood of its first forms runs through us and in us beats a pulse as old as the universe.

COMA

If revolution is awakening—a long-awaited aberration that follows a deep mass lethargy—then is not sleep a return to dispossession? A synonym for failure? The failure to reshape reality? The

inability to alter the circumstances of life? Defeat in the battle to redefine the self? But a close look at what happens in the moment we enter sleep tells us something different, for this moment does not herald the beginning of a failure, it simply concedes it. It is the moment in which the sleeper surrenders to his drowsiness and his inability to remain awake. The failure comes first, whether it is the failure of the self to maintain control or the defeat of the group in its battle for change. After this comes the moment of actual sleep: the moment of failure’s concession, and not its cause; the moment of defeat’s acceptance, and not of its production. The individual’s sleep is the act of a self that has dropped the reins, and shared slumber is the act of a group that knows the battle has been decided and that to remain on the field is suicide. The self that does not sleep is a neurotic self, plagued by itself; the group that does not sleep is willful and proud, unable to alter reality because it lives cut off from it. For it to reconnect to reality, for it to gather itself again, to wake, it must doze a little. The sleeper who comes to bed with an unrealisable hope soon wakes into reality inspired with a new dream. The failure to change reality is a failure that can be overcome and escaped, but the failure to apprehend this initial failure and to accept it is a complex failure: not a sleep from which one may wake, but a coma.

THE HANGING GARDEN

Who could have anticipated that the city which blooms in sleep would be the garden in which we sleepers stand like trees between earth and heaven? Floor tiles crack apart to reveal green shoots. Windows shatter and give out branches. Asphalt subsides and over it flows water. Buildings break down into dens and dives. Walls shift and streets change. The city itself has cast off obedience to its masters, has entered another time, has surrendered to another power. And unlike the scurrying city of the visible, here all things happen slowly. In the hanging garden of sleep the sun’s rays fall slowly on the leaves, slowly the roots worm through the soil, the flowers open slowly. Continual transformations so slow they are hidden from the naked eye. The city of sleep, at once devoid of people and seething with life: the many people who each night silently surrender to the same sleeping, though thousands of miles might lie between them, become a garden inhabited by plants and insects and birds. Inhabited, too, by the souls of the dead. They flee the din of the cities of the day and are

drawn to the garden's stillness where death finds its place amid the unseen changes with which the garden hums. The dead walk freely about. They drift through the flowers, diffuse through trees' branches, pass through their trunks. We hear their whispers and they hear ours. We touch them and they touch us. We mix with them and they with us. And so we stay till day dawns and the tiles heal and the trees sink into the ground and the buildings rise and the walls return to their places and the roads smooth out and over them flow cars. People return and the dead flee.

STARLESS

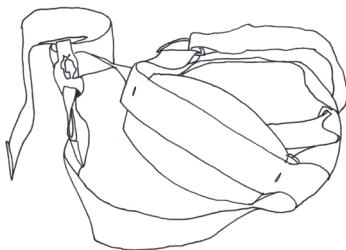
Unconsciousness is sleep's corruption, occurring when sleep has failed to extricate itself both from the binaries of its environment and from the function assigned it, to become no more a brief dousing of consciousness. Industrial capitalism reduced sleep to a function, its task to grant a measure of relief to the collapsing consciousness. It regulated it as a shift, eight hours long, followed by the shift at the factory. But high capitalism, which no longer produced anything at all, came to regard sleep as a black hole. Sleep was a short swoon, a begrudged break in the flow of uninterrupted communication, and as such had

to be quickly shaken off and a rapid return made to a state of contact. As the attention economy replaces the production economy, consciousness becomes neurotic, turning endlessly about itself and fired by a promise forever unhonoured. How can such a consciousness sleep? It is constantly afraid that it might miss something, that the promise will be honoured while it is absent. All it can do is remain alert until it drops into unconsciousness. Capitalism's night grows shorter and shorter until it almost disappears altogether, and in it sleep is one long coma dispensed in small doses.

Haytham el-Wardany is writer and translator, born in Cairo and currently living in Berlin. His interests at this time are the concept of truth and how it relates in the post-revolutionary context. His recent books are The Book of Sleep (2017, Alkarma Publishing House, Cairo) and How to Disappear (2013, Kayfa Ta Publications, Cairo/2018, Sternberg Press, Berlin/NY).

→ *Bodies That Walk in Public
are Primed¹ – Some Notes
and Drawings on the Instru-
mentalisation of Sleep*
Isabelle Sully

Midway through preparing for an exhibition on the contemporary politics of sleep I had to have a wisdom tooth removed. At the time, the correlation between the two events wasn't so clear except that I knew I wanted to be put to sleep. In the lead up to the procedure I was told again and again about the haunting sound of possessive pliers scratching enamel off the surface of the tooth, desperately grasping for an angle to latch onto. Or the screeching drill pummeling through the center of the tooth should the plier's fail, cracking it cleanly in four, a foreign, pincer-like hand then forcing its way inside the mouth to fetch the residuals. I wanted to protect the territory, protest its partial paralysis. Even though I was assured about the lack of physical pain, the area seemed too close to my tongue, to my brain, for me to be able to relax. I took a breath. An x-ray soon revealed that the tooth's roots had curled—the first indication of a difficult extraction and my final plea for total sedation. Yet it was so small that a general anesthetic was just too excessive in comparison. It would also mean that my body would take a longer and more painful path to recovery, and in already anticipating the effacement of the tooth, I was finally able to reconcile the shorter route: a kind of strategic sedative, if you will.



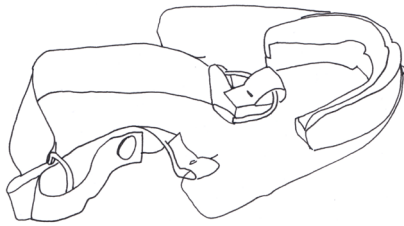
Pacifier (prototype), 2018, ink on paper, 21 x 14cm

It seemed contradictory to me at the time that a deeper sleep resulted in a less resilient body. Yet I had to think of the endless journal articles each arguing with factual assurance for the ne-

cessity for eight hours sleep a night, or no more than five, or somewhere between six and a half and seven. Claims on our sleep health are made regularly, digested and instituted in places that generate a life geared for production. Like in fatigue prevention policy, where workers are recommended to cut down their commute to work, sleep a minimum of six hours a night, not work back-to-back shifts and maintain mental, social and physical health. To insure the latter, we are advised to avoid heavy family and social obligations, limit the level of community activities and eschew emotional issues. Such regimentation limits experiences conducive of having a life and produces a structure whereby we are answerable only to our work; something often orchestrated or performed under the demand of an exterior power (on which we are largely dependent). And in light of all these elements, it is an image of sleep as a mode of preparation that is put forth. My desire to go fully under for the removal for a mere wisdom tooth speaks to the level of internalisation present in this image. I was willing to be put on hold—sleep was a miraculous method of deferral, from which I would wake 'healed'. And while the politics around sleep, our access to it and our desire for it are regularly and increasingly frontal, this notion of sleep as being innocent in nature is largely uncontested. In relegating sleep to an ancillary realm of preparation, could we be forgoing the potential of the image of the sleeper? Aside from medical advice, was there something to be said for the dentist's recommendation that spoke to the benefits of being only partially asleep?

In Japan, for example, due to the acceptance of sleep in the workplace, bosses have been noted to pretend to be asleep in order to eavesdrop on their employees. Such strategising speaks to this unassailably innocent image of sleep. The instrumentalisation of sleep is further utilised in practice in the sphere of technology (cryogenically freezing people in order generate the means for the colonisation of space, for example), in punishment (sleep deprivation in order to extract information) and in crime (sedatives, such as Rohypnol and Temazepam, used in order to pacify a victim). Here, sleeping is figured as an antidote to resistance, and is in effect weaponised. In the sphere of medicine, anesthetic is used in order to tranquilise the patient, and in mental health prescriptions like Doxepin and Trazodon are issued as depressants to increase the likelihood of sleep. Sleep is then figured as an antidote to

suffering. In this myriad of contradictions—where sleep’s function can be at once a form of control, at twice a form of resistance and at thrice a pacification—the general consensus is usually our helplessness in the face of capitalism. This seemingly irreconcilable dynamic, and our ‘complicity’ in it, leaves us feeling that desiring the pleasures of a well-balanced waking life means we’re not working hard enough, not fighting fiercely enough and not punishing ourselves nearly enough (in light of the self-loathing present in actually wanting the ‘frivolity’ of a social life). Yet the aim here is not to illustrate the extent of capitalism’s control over our sleep health: this is already a given. It is more to think about our relationship to the image of the sleeper within this constellation, as if from the outside. In understanding the image of sleep, its implication, imitation and inducement, we might find some relief in the instrumentalisation of its innocence.



Muzzle (prototype), 2018, ink on paper, 21 x 14cm

This is where the image of sleep could be implementable, whereby imitating a kind of visual cue primed precisely for whomever or whatever it may be that assumes control of our sleep life. In doing so, we consider the relationship between image, prop and intent. This is the case when, comforted by the anesthetic, my partner watched unflinchingly from the sidelines as my tooth was drilled, cracked open and drain of infected blood. While completely privy to the size of the knife that sliced open my gum and the two trainee nurses that mounted my body in an attempt to counter its resistance to the pressure of the pliered extraction, for us both, the needle that dispensed the anesthetic was image enough that I was asleep. These instruments of assurance are also suggested in less invasive ways in the fatigue prevention policies mentioned earlier. I became increasingly obsessed with these readily available props, recommended within certain clauses and by certain health advisors, all of

which hold the function of increasing the depth of sleep. Mouthguards, anti-grinding pads, tongue stabilisers, nose clips, breathing masks, jaw straps. With these apparatuses being made for occupying the mouth, all I could think of was an absence of speech. To me, these objects inhabited the double meaning of orality—that is, something that is of the mouth and something that is spoken rather than written. I wondered at what point the performativity present in them, even if only by way of their negation of any kind of performance at all (whether that be of work or of speech), could in some way be instrumentalised on a similar day-to-day scale.

From a sculptural perspective, there is something about the form of these objects and their relationship to the body that demands attention. The scale is so small that it can be tended to; someone is being addressed (literally). This differs in scale from the bigger question at hand, which attempts to reconcile the politics of work and sleep by formulating a large-scale resistance to the capitalist present. The answer here seems only to be ‘more sleep’. Instead, the day-to-day assurances of fatigue prevention could be applied to a performative register, where an object’s relationship to the body could instigate an image of sleep (within which we act) rather than putting us to sleep entirely. For in my fear of experiencing the operation I insisted on being completely pacified—by default, I opted for tackling the bigger question. However, what really evaded me was an understanding of the benefits of being largely awake. That my tiny wisdom tooth caused pain throughout my body did not mean that the scale in which it was dealt with had to match that too. On an operational level, with localised anesthetic, it was extracted pain-free and restoratively from my body, while being only partially asleep.

1. In a rather cyclical turn of events, I borrow this title from Haytham El-Wardany’s *Book of Sleep*, first introduced to me by Ruth Noack at her symposium *Between Subversion and Hallucination*, held at the Dutch Art Institute in March 2018.
2. ‘Fatigue Prevention in the Workplace: Your Health and Safety Guide’, WorkSafe Victoria, Edition 2, June 2, 2017, <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/fatigue-prevention-workplace-your-health-and-safety-guide>.
3. It is also commonly noted that if a worker falls asleep at their desk or in a meeting in Japan it is considered as positive: the worker

is tired from working too hard. Bryant Rousseau, 'Napping in Public? In Japan, That's a Sign of Diligence', The New York Times, December 16, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/16/world/what-in-the-world/japan-inemuri-public-sleeping.html>.

Isabelle Sully (b. 1991, AU) works as an artist, curator and writer. Her context-based practice revolves around the social, economic and administrative mediation of publics within and through the frame of art. Originally from Melbourne, she currently lives in the Netherlands where she is the editor at Publication Studio Rotterdam.

→ *Prague Insomnia*
Anna Dacqué



→ *An Ode to Reverie* Sharon Sliwinski

Humans are good at altering reality. It's one of our special talents. When faced with an unsatisfactory or unpleasant situation, we can bend our considerable mental abilities towards inventing a new situation in which the unpleasantness is done away with. My six-year-old niece has become rather expert at this. When she encounters something that she doesn't like—if we're playing a card game, for instance, and she's not happy with the card she's drawn—she will say firmly: "No, that doesn't count!" and turn the card over, as if to negate its existence.

This is a normal behavior for a six-year-old. But this kind of magical thinking can have rather more significant consequences in the adult world—both on an individual level and on a social scale. Religious fundamentalists can insist their child is possessed rather than face facts that contradict their worldviews. The president of a powerful democratic country can decry vast swathes of the media as "fake news." Sigmund Freud would probably have described these as examples of defense mechanisms. He spent much of his career cataloguing of all the various ways humans can deny, distort, or evade the unpleasant aspects of reality.

Defense mechanisms are important psychological tools. Each one of us relies on them when we feel threatened. But when the impulse to substitute an invented reality for actual reality becomes too powerful—when a person "loses touch" as we say—the situation can tip into a kind of mania.

One of the problems with magical thinking is that our invented realities lack the weight—the sheer immovable alterity—of actual existing reality. Nothing of any substance can be built in this invented world except further layers of magical construction. As paradoxical as it may sound, the encounter with actual existing reality—and the radical otherness that is found there—is fundamental for the creation of genuine self-experience. We must necessarily grapple with what is "not-me" in order to become an authentic self and to develop genuine interpersonal relations.

As you might imagine from my title, I would like to make a case for one very special kind of losing touching with reality, namely reverie. What I

mean by this word is exactly what you might imagine: the experience of getting lost in thought, daydreams, fantasies, or even bodily sensations; letting mind wander freely; attending to the atmosphere of your inner world. It is perhaps important to distinguish this unique form of thought from the kind of distraction that is all-too familiar in today's technologically saturated world. Distraction is a state of mind produced by external forces that deliberately seek to manage our attention. Reverie, in contrast, is a mental state in which the mind wanders freely, following its own logic of desire.

Reverie is similar to, but also distinct from the more maniac forms of defense. This special form of thought allows us to engage our lived experience from multiple vantage points and enables a rich nonlinear conversation with oneself. There are various species of reverie: dreaming, for instance, is a form of reverie that occurs under the cover of sleep, a special form of mental wandering that is protected from the intrusions of waking life. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud actually defines dreaming as "nothing more than a particular form of thought" made possible by the state of sleep.

We can also link reverie to the creative work produced by artists. Plato famously worried that poets were mad, in the sense that their invented realities constituted a sort of rejection of actually existing reality. But Freud went to pains to distinguish creative work from other forms of delusion. In an essay called "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," he describes the work of the artist as constituting a special kind of turning away from reality. The artist "creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously—that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion—while separating it sharply from reality."

What distinguishes this work from other forms of defenses is the way it's linked to the actual world. Artists are generally aware that their works stand adjacent to reality, just as most spectators understand that they are temporarily leaving the demands of existing reality when they attend a film, a musical performance, or an art exhibit. Indeed, this is the point really—these cultural experiences provide welcome occasions to let one's mind wander more freely than usual.

When all goes well, these occasions for reverie will allow spectators to return to actual exist-

ing reality having been transformed. This is the tricky part. The artist doesn't have the capacity to actually transform an unpleasant reality, but they can help us develop our own imaginative capacity and emotional range, effectively enriching our inner world, which in turn, can allow us to respond more creatively to the demands of external reality. Artistic work creates new orders of experience and meaning, new types of feeling, and even new senses of embodiment and forms of relating.

Let me offer an example. Consider Joel Thompson's **2017** multi-movement choral work, *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*. The composer took inspiration from Iranian-American artist Shirin Barghi's #lastwords project. Barghi produced more than a dozen illustrations based on the final words of African-American men killed by police in recent years (figs. 1–3). In his choral work, Thompson gives these statements a musical setting. The formal structure of this work is reminiscent of Joseph Haydn's *The Seven Last Words of Christ*, but in Thompson's composition each of the movements represents one of the murdered men:

- I "Why do you have your guns out?"
– Kenneth Chamberlain, **66**
- II "What are you following me for?"
– Trayvon Martin, **16**
- III "Mom, I'm going to college."
– Amadou Diallo, **23**
- IV "I don't have a gun. Stop shooting."
– Michael Brown, **18**
- V "You shot me! You shot me!"
– Oscar Grant, **22**
- VI "It's not real."
– John Crawford, **22**
- VII "I can't breathe."
– Eric Garner, **43**

In one sense the creative work constitutes a disavowal of existing reality. The composer has ignored the larger context of the murders and infused them with a sense of martyrdom. The aim of the musical treatment, however, is to provide the opportunity for an emotional transformation. The composer uses the language of melody, harmony, timbre, pitch, and rhythm to express and process his emotions about being a young black man in a racially tense time—and also "to do something about it."

In a word, the composition allows audiences to

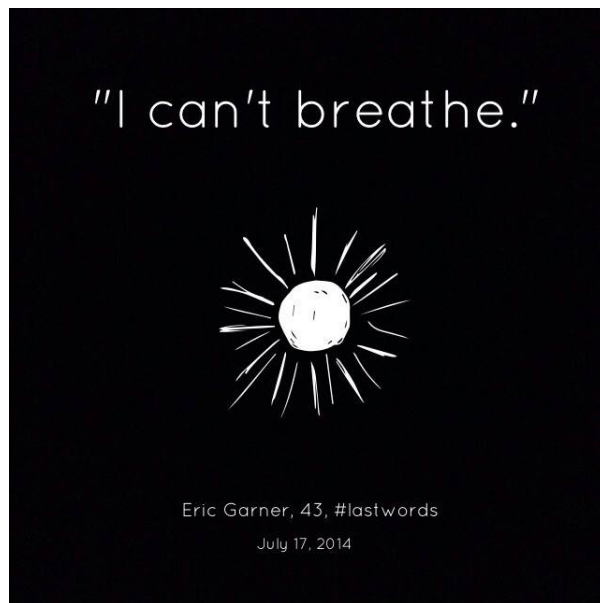
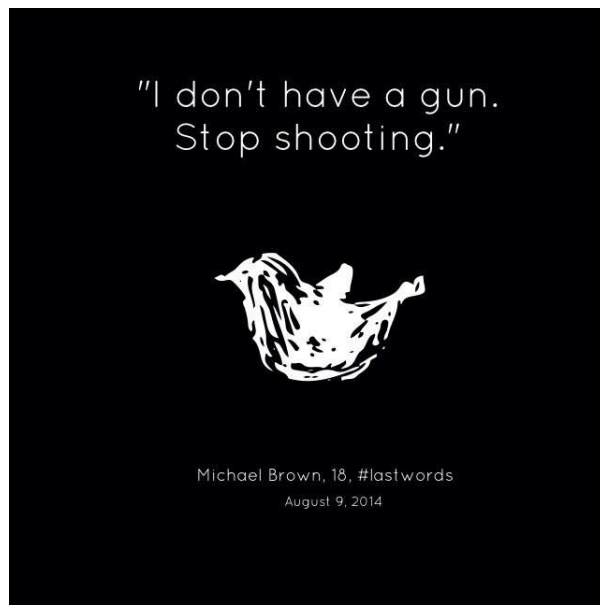
share in Thompson's reverie. Listening to—or indeed watching—a performance of *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed* allows audiences to step away from reality and enter into the composer's fantasy world. The creative project does not alter the fact of the murders, but by inviting audiences into the sonic environment, Thompson provides the opportunity for a collective transformation.

This is no small matter. By making his reverie available to others, Thompson has provided an opportunity for new meanings and new forms of relating to these terrible events, which in turn creates space for a new version of our collective selves. This is the political potential of this special form of defense. Reverie provides the seeds of social transformation: traumatic events that initially invoked confusion, pain, fear, and rage are re-presented in a form which can elicit sadness, grief, benevolent surrender, a sense of beauty, and indeed, something we might even call grace—a new sense of aliveness that was otherwise unimaginable. This is the power of reverie: it can transform an awful reality into a new experience of life.

"Mom, I'm going to college."



Amadou Diallo, 23, #lastwords
February 4, 1999



Figs. 1-3 Shirin Barghi. #lastwords

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. In this paragraph, I lean heavily on Thomas Ogden's paper "Three Forms of Thinking: Magical Thinking, Dream Thinking, and Transformative Thinking," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, Vol. 79, no. 2 (2010): 317-347.
2. For more on the logic of distraction see Nicholas G. Charr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010).
3. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. V, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), 506 n. 2. I've written much more extensively about the significance of dream-life in *Dreaming In Dark Times: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).
4. Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" (1908) SE, 9:144
5. More information about each of the men, their lives, deaths, and the cases their families have brought against police can be found on the project website: <https://sevenlastwords.org/seven-men/>
6. Joel Thompson quoted in "Love, Life & Loss" a University of Michigan video published on the university's YouTube channel, April 19, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=28&v=mPPBX4kiIVs.
7. The University of Michigan Men's Glee Club, lead by conductor Eugene Rogers, premiered the work at the Sphinx Competition in 2017. A video of the performance can be seen on the Sphinx Organization's YouTube channel, published Feb. 15, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zd-NXoqNuLRQ>

→ *A hand I wished
I'd never touched*
Alaa Abu Asad



For many years now I've believed that if I forced myself to dream of somebody, I will eventually be with this person as in a love relationship. This indeed happened to me **3** years ago: I kept evoking dreams about a knight, and a while later, we officially became together.



This notwithstanding the forced dreams, I've fallen in love with others and they loved me back. Yet, we've never come to agree to (officially) be together...





There is this recurring dream which keeps coming to me since I was a kid, and it's never been that significant for me. However, more incidents lately are obliging me to recall it: A hand, or two, are harshly rubbing my face, annoyingly blocking my sight, and violently holding my breath. In my bed at my parents house, I've dreamt of our neighbour's hand or hands – I can't clearly remember – kneading my face as if it was a pizza dough being prepared for baking. Mum always convinced herself that that woman, our neighbour, practices sorcery, and that my dream is nothing but a product of witchcraft.



Yesterday, I went to a man's house in the south part of the city whom I've been chatting with for a while to fist him, and I was asked to choose between black and ordinary white latex gloves. I chose the blacks without hesitation.

Alaa Abu Asad lives and works between the Netherlands and Palestine. He received a BFA from the Department of Photography at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, and MA from the Dutch Art Institute (DAI) in Arnhem. Alaa's work is mainly focused on the image and its various uses and readings.

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مأذم

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→ *A hand I wished
I'd never touched*
Sharon Sliwinski

This introduction by Sharon Sliwinski is taken from www.museumofdreams.org

After Hitler came to power in **1933**, Charlotte Beradt, a Berlin-based journalist, began to awaken night after night bathed in perspiration, teeth clenched in terror. On one of these nights, after dreaming of being hunted “from pillar to post” by storm troopers, a new thought arrived: what if she wasn’t the only one? What if the things that appeared in her nightmares were also being visited upon other people? This startling thought set in motion the seeds of a research project. Beradt quietly began to query people about their dream-life, documenting the nocturnal visions the regime had induced as “new and explicit proof of the dictatorship.”

This turned out to be no easy task. People were reluctant and sometimes afraid to confide their dreams. Beradt reports a half a dozen instances in which individuals dreamed that it was forbidden to dream (but did so anyway). She canvassed a broad cross section of the population: from students and lawyers to manufacturers and housewives. Altogether, she obtained dream reports from more than three hundred Berliners. As a Jew, she was eventually compelled to leave the country, and in **1939**, she and her husband made their way to New York, where they joined a community of exiles—a “tribe” of ex-Berliners that included Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Blücher. During the war, a New York-based leftist magazine called *Free World* published a short article about her collection of dreams. In **1966**, with Arendt’s help, Beradt published a book-length study under the title, *Das Dritte Reich des Traums*. An English-language edition, *The Third Reich of Dreams*, which included an essay by Bruno Bettelheim, quickly followed in **1968**.



*Charlotte Beradt, photo from the 1968 edition
of *The Third Reich of Dreams**

→ *Performing The Third Reich*
by Charlotte Beradt
Anja Scheffer

In the beginning of this year Ruth Noack came to me with her upcoming Roaming Assembly-Symposium “Sleeping with a Vengeance” at the Dutch Art Institute in Arnhem, Netherlands. She asked me to find a form for staging her symposium but also to give a workshop for some of her art students, based on and dealing with Charlotte Beradt’s Book “The Third Reich of Dreams” in which the journalist publishes dreams collected from totalitarian Germany between 1933–37.

The result should be performed during the symposium. The students had no theatre experience (which was a requirement for signing in), I had never met them before and the time-frame of the workshop was 3 hours. Including learning acting on stage, finding the right theatre form for the text, and all rehearsals. And the show should not last longer than 25 minutes. Quite a challenge!

So I prepared a text version for 10 actors and sent it to the students to learn by heart in preparation for the workshop: to speak the text without any interpretation, no special attitude, no tone, just technical.

After some reading (sitting in a circle) and working with the students on a natural handling of the text with the tools of classical theatre like playing with text, working with it from different perspectives and with diverse approaches like brainstorming, self presentation, addressing, voice, free-improvised speech and text interpretation – to avoid overacting. We discovered that this circle situation felt right and very intense.

Together we decided that the dreams about the Third Reich, our own experiences and view on the text, should be staged for the symposium as a group therapy situation, giving Beradt’s written words a – contemporary – voice.

Anja Scheffer is a theatre director living in Berlin. She works in different contexts in the fields of theatre/video/arts, promoting a crossover between theatre, arts and museum fields, having the educational gesture as a major aim. Among her projects: LivingTOgether (Consulate General of Germany in Toronto), Anspiel (with the Artist Seraphina Lennz for the International Garden Exhibition IGA Berlin 2017). Currently, she is developing a collaborative exhibition for the Jewish Museum Berlin, having the Jewish life now and its echoes among different ethnic communities of the city of Berlin as the main subject.



"I will show you fear in a handful of dust."

26



"THE THIRD REICH OF DREAMS"

26



"I awoke with the feeling that our existence has being changed.
In my conscious time I felt that we could escape the worst,
but my subconscious knew better."



"Fear implanted in the hearts"



"People began to terrorize themselves"



"Voluntary participants in this systematic terrorization"



„I dreamt I had a child by an Aryan whose mother wanted to take the child away from me because I was not pure-blooded Aryan.'Now that my mother is dead,' I screamed, 'not a one of you can hold a thing against me any more.' "

“A classroom, very, very large, like an auditorium. I was sitting on the left end of the very last row- the school director in front on a dais, higher than the rest, looking partly like my old school director and partly like Hitler - in fact, he was called Dictater. We were having our lesson on race. Standing next to Dictater, but on a lower level and facing the class as a specimen, was Paul. Dictater took his pointer and traced the contours of Paul's face as if it were a map. I realized that I had to act if I wanted to save Paul, whose deathly pale, pathetic face I still saw up there by Dictater's, only on a lower level. I jumped up and ran down the aisle toward the front, so that I was standing in the middle of the class. I cried out, I don't ordinarily say anything, but that is not true, simply not true!' I was expecting an even more emphatic murmur of agreement than before, but among the rows of students there was only icy silence, just mute, expressionless faces.”





"Systematic"

30



30

"From a political or the purely human point of view dreams show the psychological extremes to which one can be driven by outside encroachments on one's innermost sphere, and how man can react in his very depths when the powers that be make it too difficult for him to love his neighbor, even the one dearest to him."



"I dreamt I was no longer able to speak except in chorus with my group."

31



31

"I realized it was high time to escape. I peeked through the window - I could see figures patrolling down below. So I had to crawl out over our balcony, which I had camouflaged by painting the geraniums brown, though I thought to myself as I climbed out that they only looked like autumn, not like Nazi."



"I receive the same comment on all my report cards and on all the class work I do: 'Very good, but unsatisfactory because subversive.' "

39



"Every night I kept trying to rip the swastika off the Nazi flag, all the while feeling happy and proud of myself, but in the morning it was always sewn on tightly again."

39



"In a music hall - I wondered all of a sudden how I was *going to get* back. I didn't know the way by foot so I would have to take a train, and that meant I needed a passport. Then someone came through the music hall carrying five or six passports which he was distributing to people whose names he called out. I snatched one away from him as he came by. Then a chase – I made it. When I opened the passport, however, I discovered it belonged to a twenty- nine-year-old Estonian woman - that would do, but it was covered with markings indicating that she was politically incriminated. While still leafing through it, I found myself standing before a customs official on a train, and with a *smile* I handed him my passport to be stamped. I told myself, *You've just got to want to*, and although he raised an eyebrow, I got by."



"I dreamt I was saying, I don't *have* to always say *no* anymore."

"At a concert. Hitler came through the front rows, shaking hands with everyone. I thought frantically - can I give him my hand? Don't I have to tell him I'm against him? Meanwhile he'd come up and placed both his hands on mine. He left them there until I woke up."





"I went mountain-climbing with a guide. And then, on the highest peak, it happened - the guide threw off his cape and hood and stood before me in the full uniform of a Storm Trooper."



"Two benches were standing side by side in Tiergarten Park, one painted the usual green and the other yellow. There was a trash can between them. I sat down on the trash can and hung a sign around my neck like the ones blind beggars sometimes wear - also like those the government makes 'race violators' wear. It read, '*I Make Room for Trash If Need Be.*' "



"I dreamt that I no longer dream about anything but rectangles, triangles, and octagons, all of which somehow look like Christmas cookies - you see, it was forbidden to dream."



"It no longer matters whether blue eyes, blond hair, and a six-foot stature truly guarantee superior human qualities. What does matter is that one can use this means as any other to organize people to the point . . . where no one has the opportunity any more to consider whether this distinction is meaningful or not. . . . This apparently minor, in reality decisive operation of taking ideological views seriously..." (Hannah Arendt)



Cast

Teresa Distelberger

Zoë Scoglio

Baha Görkem Yalim

Rabea Ridlhammer

Samantha Mc Culloch

Ciprian Burete

Bethany Crawford

Jasmin Schaedler

Jonathan Baumgärtner

Lukas Hoffman

→ *The Exhibition as a Psychodrama* Marcelo Rezende

In the year of 1970, the Museum of Art of Sao Paulo (MASP) held the first Psychodrama International Congress in the city of Sao Paulo, bringing for the first time among the Brazilians this (then, at least) so unusual and fresh concept: the theatre, the act of self-dramatisation, the role-playing and the possible catharsis as a methodology to touch, sometimes win, a personal drama. However, what's in the shadow of this so curious historical moment is the position of the museum, the political questions on the concepts of exhibition and what does it mean to exhibit, in the end. This very particular story comes to mind and becomes an interesting slot through which the critic and curator Ruth Noack's series of 'performative' conferences could be observed, with a special attention to the project developed by the theatre director Anja Scheffer for the Roaming Assembly ("Between Subversion and Hallucination"), organised in the Dutch Art Institute in March of 2018.

Resuming the Brazilian episode: the group of psychoanalysts approached the couple Pietro and Lina Bo Bardi to request the use of the museum as the site for the congress; the decision taken by the Bardis since the beginning was to have the MASP not as a passive participant, but to find ways to integrate the institution with the goals of the event. In doing so, to have an active role – so to speak. Lina did ask for a coherent political philosophy between the museum and the organisers. After this agreement, the museum became in all meanings active: Lina developed an Arena theatre in the shape of an horseshoe, with seats made of wood, a stage with two chairs and three seats in the format of the cube were set in place. The provisional theatre could hold around three thousand people, creating by means of the psychodrama a political libertarian experience, and not the other way around, as it could be expected.

Staging, displaying, showing, promoting an experience has been part of the (undercurrent) narrative on exhibitions, with very strong cases to look at in Germany during the first half of the 20th century; and with the new avant-garde after the Second War, different ideas about what we

are talking about when we are talking about exhibitions took form. Following Ruth Noack and Anja Scheffer's experience there is another seismic instant to be noted in the already-mentioned narrative.

The language of dreams and sleep, and the formats of the processes and its materialisation were displayed in "Between Subversion and Hallucination". The word 'displayed' should not be taken in a casual manner here. In "Between Subversion and Hallucination", the conference is not a conference, and at the same way 'performative' comes with a new meaning. If, in the history of the avant-garde, the idea of 'performing' an intellectual discussion (as among the Futurists) has been present, and everything can and should be theatrical (a nod to Hugo Ball), Noack's strategy points to another direction: the performative process becomes the exhibition per se. As Lina Bo Bardi said, 'putting the viewer as an actor of the theatre of life'. In the Benjaminian sense, a participative experience: what it's seen puts everyone as a critical agent of reality.

The clearest part of the exhibition's aim and intentions could be observed in the work developed by Anja Scheffer, an almost abusive process of transference: the artists became actors, the actors became patients and the viewer becomes a participant of the psychodrama, concerning not a personal trauma, but the trauma of history. Sat on chairs, the group articulates some abstracts of the book "The Third Reich of Dream" by Charlotte Beradt on a stage (curiously, the image resembles the one organised by Lina Bo in 1970), where dreams dreamed during the Nazi years in Germany return through the voices of the group of artists. The result has a powerful meaning: the past is not only the past anymore, every border of time dissolves itself, creating a political libertarian experience, and in doing so the catharsis of the theatre becomes at the same time representation and psychoanalytical catharsis, true and not true, bringing to memory a very Freudian concept of a radical political level: *Nachträglichkeit*. The fact that a trauma should happen a second time to be understood as such. The memory is then reprinted in accordance with a later experience, in an *après-coup*. In this case, on political, artistic and psychoanalytic levels.

As said by the Brazilian critic and curator Ivo Mesquita, all the best exhibitions should be just like a psychoanalytic session: something

happens to everyone in the venue, and all the rational discourse will be not enough to explain what just happened there. Then, immediately the session is over. Go home, and think about it. However, as Lina Bo Bardi has observed, and Ruth Noack and Anja Scheffer have just shown, the reflective instant can also be a collective experience.

Marcelo Rezende (b. 1968 in Brazil) is a researcher, critic and exhibition-maker.

He was director of the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia (2012–2015), artistic director of the 3rd Bahia Biennial (2014) and was part of the curatorial group of the 28th São Paulo Biennial (2008), amongst other projects and occupations. Author of the novel Arno Schmidt (2005), he is associate curator of the Museu do Mato (Scrubland Museum) in Bahia, and curator of the exhibition Kaffee aus Helvetia (2017) at the Johann Jacobs Museum (Zürich). He is co-director of the Archiv der Avantgarden (AdA) in Dresden, Germany.

→ *The Inside is merely the fold of the outside, as if the ship were a folding of the sea.*
Baha Görkem Yalım



The video is available online at <http://luleabiennial.se/en/journalen>

“The Inside is merely the fold of the outside, as if the ship were a folding of the sea.” is not a forensic but a sensual gaze at the past. The work folds the past into the present to suggest a future, conjure its spirit, as a dream does. Synchronicity in different times demands adequacy between our means and how to display them in creating an affect by moulding its form through its content. A film is an intricate thing; it opens up something and closes off another; a secret in the open. The fold oscillates. The oscillation means there is an affect on the past too and not just in the present and the future. This affect is where the fantasy lays. This affect speaks of a desire to queer history, a merging of the bodies of the workers, the artist and the statues in carnal poetics.

The connection between the maker’s body, the sculptures and the workers in the Anatolian Civilisations Museum relies on the shift between labour and sleep (laborious sleep or sleepy labour) which is made opaque through a subversion that manifests the statues as workers and the workers

as the sleepers, relying on their equality in inhabitation. The museum, taken as a single morph, is subverted through sleep to expose a system of implicit codes containing binary morphemes; labour and leisure, displacement and inaction, entitlement and prohibition, responsibility and immunity. Amongst artefacts, the workers’ body becomes heightened in subjectivity yet paradoxically deemed more vulnerable. The maker, however, is hidden and returns as a voice animating the lifeless forms and as a ghost in the city shots at night. These intriguing exchange of energies seem to be stemming from concepts of entitlement and displacement.

The workers are standing there, drinking tea, spending the majority of their time in a museum, walking the floors, conversing in small talk captured in the same breath as the artefacts demanding thinking about entitlement as the artefacts appear to be employed by the state as much as the workers who are clear in their eligibility. They are comfortable there. Socialising, organising, finding their personalised ways of attending

or cleaning the museum which happens during visiting hours. This as an extension also makes us question: Why is it strange to see people being comfortable in their work environment, witnessing their personalised technique of cleaning the upper part of a display or vacuum cleaning the museum in visiting hours?

Being surrounded with artefacts of past civilisations, past entitlements from Palaeolithic ages to Byzantium in chronological order of concretised historiography does something to the living body. It informs us of our mortality and answers the question of aliveness: Endurance. To borrow from Rosi Braidotti, To live intensely and be alive to the nth degree pushes us to the extreme edge of mortality. This answer has implications for the question of the limits, which are built-in to the very embodied and embedded structure of the subject. The limits are those of one's endurance – in the double sense of lasting in time and bearing the pain of confronting 'Life'. The ethical subject is one that can carry this confrontation, cracking up a bit but without having its physical or affective intensity destroyed by it. Ethics consists in reworking the pain into a threshold

of sustainability, when, and if possible: cracking, but holding it, still.

My operational centre with "The Inside is merely the fold of the outside, as if the ship were a folding of the sea" lays precisely here at the closeness of this definition of the human subject to the qualities of the artefacts at the museum. And an erotics of a secret everyone knows, a very near aloofness like cruising in parks after midnight and daydreaming.

Baha Görkem Yalın is a visual artist. Yalın's exploration, not only of content, but also of the use of artistic media, is in a constant flux, refusing to crystallise in a particular form. Yalın employs video, installation and performance sometimes in variations and sometimes as folds of the same. His practice at times crosses the borders of a writer, teacher and curator. He is currently living in Amsterdam.

→ *Afternoon* Pissarro
Anna Dacqué



Anna Dacqué, born 1964 in Vienna, lives in Berlin. She studied feminist art and art history and despite a continuous flow of work, only interrupted by the rearing of her two children, she has exhibited seldomly.

In her own words: "Why appear unless it makes complete sense?"

Lulu-journal

Lulu is how Luleå first appeared in writing in **1397**, a name of Sami origin that can be translated as "Eastern Water". This is the title of the Luleå Biennial's journal, published once a month from August **2018** through February **2019**. Across seven issues, through text, image and film, readers are offered different points of entry to the biennial's overall theme: the dark landscape. All issues take as their starting point a public artwork in Norrbotten. The Lulu journal is made by the biennial's artistic directors and invited guest editors. It is published on the biennial's website and can be downloaded for printing. www.luleabiennial.se

Colophon

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