



Arts +
Opinions

CALL FOR PAPERS

Theme: Dreams
Esse arts + opinions no. 112
Deadline: April 1, 2024

Send your text in US letter format (1,500 and 2,000 words, doc, docx, or rtf) to redaction@esse.ca before April 1, 2024. Please include a short biography (45 words), an abstract of the text, and postal and email addresses.

Applicants who wish to first submit a statement of intent (250 words) are invited to do so at least 3 months before the submissions deadline. We also welcome submissions (reviews, essays, analyses of contemporary art issues) not related to a particular theme. An acknowledgment of receipt will be sent within 7 days of the deadline. If you have not been notified, please contact us to ensure your text has been received.

DREAMS

In dreams, we face our deepest desires and fears. For many, they are how we process the day, solve a problem, or discover our true selves. This is what we might call the scientific or natural way of understanding the function of dreams. For Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, who practised the interpretation of dreams, our nightly visions could be explained, respectively, as wish fulfilment or as symbolic. But does the interpretation of dreams kill their ability to affect life? This is a question that musicologist Phil Ford and author J. F. Martel ask on their podcast *Weird Studies*, in the episode titled "On James Hillman's *The Dream and the Underworld*." Rather than diminish or explain away dreams through interpretation, Ford and Martel emphasize that dreams are *part of* reality, not just metaphor or the brain dumping excess data, and that we live in our dreams just as we do in our waking life.

The power of dreams lies first and foremost in the great mystery of the fact that they exist at all. Although dreaming is not unique to humans—by studying the brain activity of sleeping rats, researchers at MIT proved that animals have complex dreams—as a species, we are obsessed with our dreams: analyzing them, archiving them, and depicting them. Art about dreams or that uses dream logic feels accessible to many, as dreaming is a universal experience. The enduring popularity of surrealist art stems from our fascination with the uncanny, the weird, or what we might call today the glitches in the matrix.

Strangely, these moments can occur as much in waking life as during sleep, as well as in that indescribable liminal space where we slide in and out of consciousness. Artist and filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul is a master of blurring this boundary. He believes that we access new worlds through art the same way we do when we dream, and he even encourages his audiences to fall asleep during screenings. Some of the most affecting works of contemporary art are those that weave the language of dreams and nightmares seamlessly into reality, as does film director David Lynch, for example. But just as reality can feel like a nightmare—as it so often does with the compounding of the ecological crisis, increasing fascist political movements around the world, and rapid advancement of artificial intelligence technologies—dreams represent hope for many. They refer us to utopian horizons of future worlds and invoke artistic and political practices of imagining otherwise.

In *Decolonial dreams: unsettling the academy through namewak*, Métis anthropologist Zoe Todd shares the story of the endangered lake sturgeon in northern Alberta and the state of prairie fish generally as they have been devastated by colonialism and subsequent environmental destruction. Todd's decolonial dream is "to build something more accountable, reciprocal and loving in place of structures and narratives that currently exist." Thinking and working collectively is key to Todd's vision of the future. A dream this size is actualizable only if we dream it into reality together. This is why feminist artist Susan Hiller reminded us not to relegate our dreams to the private realm. In *Dream Mapping* (1974), Hiller rendered dreaming as a collective experience, allowing for new perspectives on personal internal issues.

As some of the most notorious insomniacs and consumers of harmful substances, artists would do well to consider the reparative nature of sleep and dreams (the topic of drugs actually takes up a large portion of Ford and Martel's conversation on dreams, as they overlap in a number of ways, including the spiritual and transcendental). Given the historical links between the role of the artist and the expression of visions, the imagination, and fantasy, this thematic issue seeks to tease out the particular capacities of dreams. *Esse arts + opinions* invites authors to propose texts on the subject of dreams as they are being explored in the arts today. What tactics are there for those who wish to bring the dreamworld into the waking world, and what are the results of this endeavour? How might sleeping and dreaming pose a problem for capitalism? Conversely, how is "the Dream" co-opted by bosses to drive workers to advance capitalism? How do dreams bring humans closer to or further distinguish us from animals or artificial intelligence?

EDITORIAL POLICY

Published by Les éditions Esse, *Esse arts + opinions* is a bilingual magazine focused mainly on contemporary art and multidisciplinary practices. Specializing in essays on issues in art today, the magazine publishes critical analyses that address art in relation to its context. Each issue contains a thematic section, portfolios of artworks, articles critiquing the international culture scene, and reviews of exhibitions, events, and publications. The esse.ca platform also offers articles on contemporary art and an archive of previous issues of *Esse*.

Submissions are accepted three times a year: January 10, April 1 and September 1. The texts can be submitted for one of the following 3 sections:

Feature: essays between 1,500 and 2,000 words. The guideline regarding the theme is available online 4 to 6 months prior to the deadline: <http://esse.ca/en/callforpapers>

Articles: essays, articles or interviews between 1,250 and 2,000 words.

Reviews: reviews of exhibitions, events or publications (maximum 500 words, without footnotes, or 950 words, with one or two footnotes maximum). You can find guidelines for reviews here: <https://esse.ca/en/publishing-guidelines>

1. With the exception of the expressed consent of Les éditions Esse, the writer agrees to submit a previously unpublished, original text.
2. All articles are reviewed by the Editorial Board, which reserves the right to accept or refuse a submitted article. Selection criteria are based on the quality of the analyze and writing, the relevance of the text in the issue (in regards to the theme) and on the relevance of the chosen artworks and artists. Selection of articles may take up to 6 weeks after submission by the writer. The Board's decision is final. A refused text will not be re-evaluated.
3. With the exception of the expressed consent of the Board, the Board does not consider articles that may represent a potential conflict of interest between the writer and the content of the article (i.e., a text written by the curator of an exhibition).
4. The writers whose pieces are selected commit to format their text according to the typographic standards of *Esse*, following the guidelines sent to them with the publishing contract.
5. With the respect to the vision and style of the writer, the Board reserves the right to ask for corrections and modifications to be made to ensure overall clarity, and coherence of an article.
6. Conditionally accepted articles will be up for discussion between the writer and the Board. If changes are requested by the Board, the writer will have 15 (fifteen) days to carry these out.
7. All costs of typographical correction of the author's text shall be borne by Les éditions Esse except the author's corrections, if applicable, which shall be borne by the author.