

Excerpts from Dream Ecology - Maralynn Cherry

intro

“Dream Ecology” addresses the body as a perceptive archetype that gathers psychic traces along the rifts of our organic history. This perceptive body (subjective) unfolds in spaces and moves through time while gathering, ordering, and arranging disparate objects, architectures and landscapes. A study of form (morphology) becomes symbolic, while outlining fundamental models that picture whole environments. This curatorial project has brought together four visual artists, a dancer and two sound artists. Together the works convey subtle architectures of the psyche while examining landscapes, scientific and technological constructs, bodies in motion and the hidden perceptions of sounds and pattern.

The dream is used as a fundamental scaffolding in order to realize or bring into presence the latent aspects or desires that our bodies experience through cultural and natural environments. Each installation or performance focusses our position allowing us to reconfigure that which is concealed. Dream ecology as a projected state allows us to redefine the nature of our cultural apparatuses. Through this positioning of our bodies we move into rooms, landscapes and technologies as though in a dream.

Freud, in “Interpretation of Dreams,” constructs what he refers to as a “psychic apparatus” that configures a subconscious, pre-conscious and conscious system. They work together not unlike “a successive system of telescopic lenses.”¹

Dream Analysis requires layers of interpretation that are constantly in a state of flux as raw material is gathered into a telling presence that triggers hidden memories and maps aspects of our bodies in transition. The language of dreams and artistic practice has much to contribute here. Carl Jung makes reference to what he calls the *unus mundas*,² or the unity of matter and psyche. It is important to draw parallels between the archetypal constructs in dreams and the construction and measurement of physical reality. The meeting of the imagination and the physical reality creates “bifurcations” or mutations allowing the body to explore both micro and macroscopic territories. Dreamscapes become landscapes which become virtual spaces as all relate to representations of subjectivity and environment.”

excerpt 0 degrees

“Within our dreams there is a labyrinth of rooms, caverns, and critics. The architecture of sleep allows the psyche to mutate buildings in order to encompass the shape of our subjectivity or souls. There is a poetic vision that Penelope Stewart establishes in her sensitive installations. She manages to focus the viewer’s attention on what I would call the psychic traces of the body as architecture. Gestures and materials manifest in her work so that space itself becomes indicative of the interior of the soul. We are made aware of the liminal space or threshold between our bodies and the dwellings we inhabit. Stewart allows us to reconfigure ourselves in rooms or landscapes as though we had awakened from a dream space. Her choice of materials reflects perceptions of her body in close association with the actual construction of a given location. The form of our anatomy is drawn into a memetic discourse with the environment. Organic morphology underlies the blueprints of architectural and engineered sites.

¹ Sigmund Freud, “The Interpretation of Dreams” in *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, trans and ed. Dr. A. A. Brill (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), 488

² Marie Louise von Franz, *Number and Time*, trans. Andrea Dykes (Evanston: North Western University Press, 1974), 17

The substance of Stewart's architectural psyche also reflects a feminine desire to touch and heal the space we occupy. The hidden memories and physical aging of a structure require a voice. Stewart's two previous installations *breath* and *phalaene* are reconstituted in her new work *0 degrees*. A book work sits on a table for the viewer to flip through as a video loop is projected down onto the book. There is a history to the images in the film loop and text referring to hands, engineer drawings of the Welland Canal, and a moth. It is as though spaces are being opened up by the unconscious, releasing memories like souls. The book itself repeats each image in translucent organza; the gesture of the hand seems to peel back the skin of each picture. While reflecting on Hannah Arendt, Stewart states that, "at the 0 degrees of existence...every narrative is the repetition of our birth". Here one perceives unconscious projections that lie concealed beneath cultural designs. In a sense we move through the human metropolis as though in a dream collecting fragments which have been forgotten or left unattended."

conclusion

"The use of dreams interpretation, while contemplating our concept of ecology, allows us to enter spaces and deconstruct as much as possible our "scales of observation."⁶ In a dream space it is up to us to imagine relationships where none seemed possible. We are constantly placed at the borderlands between a series of collapsed perceptions. The shifts in our sense of dwelling within spaces or views can modify how we imagine, symbolize, or represent our levels of participation. In one sense our technologies, scientific paradigms and aesthetic constructs could be considered fragments of a puzzle. As pieces are brought into closer proximity, our levels of interpretation become more fluid. Perceptions re-organize our sense of habitation. *Dream Ecology* is a process of stratification. Our sense of knowing unfolds outward as the world folds inward. As dreamers we are in a constant state of re-organizing our sense of place. "

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