

Dream Room

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This installation explores dreams and their importance. I am interested in why dreams are important and what they mean. Why don't we look further into why we dream? Why aren't dreams more significant to people? Not only are dreams important for therapeutic benefits, they are also important for inspiring a state of creativity. Salvador Dali is the father of Surrealism, Gandhi translated his dream of resistance into a well-known movement that changed the world, scientists have made scientific conclusions based off of dreams, and many innovations have been initiated from the creator's dreams.

My installation mimics a "dream room." The room glows to make the environment more disordered, as if one is stepping inside a dream. When the viewer enters the room, they are transported into a dreamlike scene. I want the viewers to feel comforted and captured by the animation. The animation depicts a girl falling asleep and, when she does, the world around her comes alive in a unique and creative way. The end of the animation shows the girl waking up from a dream to question it. This reflects the thought process and questions someone may have after experiencing a deep dream.

The "dream room" is meant to inspire the viewer to think more carefully about their own dreams. If people pay more attention to their dreams and what their subconscious is telling them, it allows them to connect with: their sense of self, their creative side, the world around them, and their deepest thoughts and feelings.

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Dreams are a succession of images, ideas, emotions, and sensations that usually occur involuntarily in the mind during certain stages of sleep.¹ Dreaming is something that everyone has experienced at least once in their life, even if they don't remember it. The subconscious is an area of the mind that causes confusion and controversy. The mind is capable of so much and is so complex that even scientists and philosophers cannot fully wrap their heads around it. I am more interested in why dreams are important and what they mean. Why don't we look further into why we dream, why aren't dreams more significant to people?

These detailed stories and images that our minds create when we are sleeping can cause us to feel different types of emotions when we wake up. Most dreams occur during REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, when our brain is most active, which causes our dreams to be more vivid. During REM sleep our brains are highly active while our muscles are paralyzed, causing breathing and our heart rate to become erratic.² There are many different types of dreaming such as, daydreams, nightmares, lucid dreaming, recurring dreams, and much more. We have all experienced daydreaming, in fact we experience it every single day. This is when our mind is in a level of consciousness between sleep and wakefulness³, we let our minds wander and our imagination take over, finding ourselves in a fantasy world. Daydreaming is a mild type of dreaming, whereas lucid dreaming, for example, is much more evocative. Lucid dreaming is when we become self-aware in our sleep. When this realization happens, we are able to control our own dream, we become active in our sleeping state, and are able to do things such as fly around or do anything that we imagine. People may think that this concept of being self-aware in dreams and actively controlling them is impossible or based on a mystical belief. However, there is scientific evidence suggesting that it does actually can happen. Doctor Keith Hearne is the first psychologist to track lucid dreaming and create evidence of it. His subject communicated to him from his sleep with eye movements that had been planned beforehand so he would know he is aware in his own dreams. "It was an amazing, mind-boggling, situation. I was looking at a communication from a person in another room who was asleep, 'unconscious', dreaming, yet in his own vivid world in which he was perfectly conscious and interacting with others. It was his reality - I was in my reality. A channel of communication had been established between those two realities." - Doctor Keith Hearne⁴.

We already knew what our minds are capable of in our waking life, and we now have a better understanding of how powerful they are in our sleeping state. However, people tend to ignore the subconscious. We never question what our dreams mean to us, why we dreamt of them in the first place, or how important they really are. Dreams are our thoughts and concerns; they all reflect something important. Psychologist Lauri Loewenberg talks about how dreams are our thoughts, and when you dream you are essentially just thinking on a much deeper level in a different state of mind. "Through our dreams we speak to ourselves about what is going on in our life, we guide ourselves through difficult situations or have meaningful realizations about

¹"Dream." *The Free Dictionary*, Farlex, www.thefreedictionary.com/dream.

² "REM SLEEP - TYPES AND STAGES OF SLEEP." *HowSleepWorks*, www.howsleepworks.com/types_rem.html.

³ *Dream Moods: Type of Dreams*, www.dreammoods.com/dreaminformation/dreamtypes/.

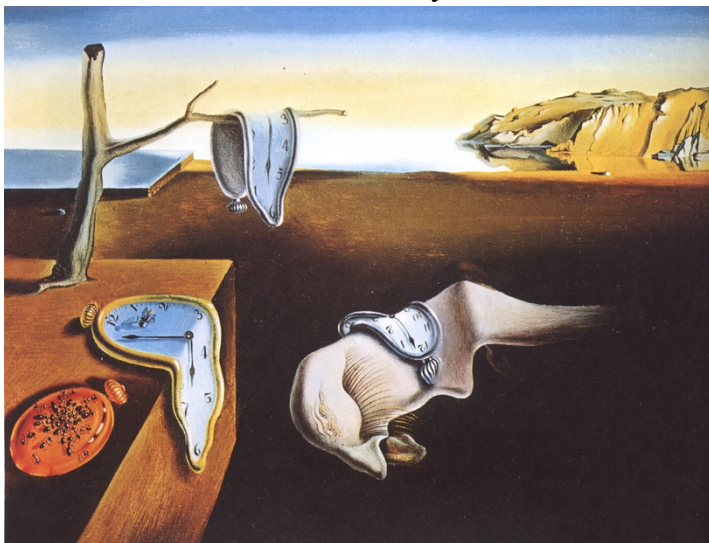
⁴ Turner, Rebecca. "Interview with Dr Keith Hearne." *World of Lucid Dreaming*, www.world-of-lucid-dreaming.com/keith-hearne-interview.html.

different situations.” - Lauri Loewenberg.⁵ I completely agree with Lauri, I believe dreams are the best glimpses of reality or the future that is available because, our sleeping consciousness can be much more brutally honest than when we are waking. Sometimes dreams aren't always “life changing” but completely random where you wake up and think to yourself ‘what the heck did I just dream’. Sometimes even these unusual confusing dreams have a deeper meaning, they can be caused by trapped emotions or worries, after all, they usually are sparked by personal experiences. Not only are dreams important in the sense that they can be our best friend to help us solve issues or have recognition of a specific situation or feeling, but they allow us to have different perspectives on life.

Imagination and dreams play a huge role in our creative worlds. We begin to think differently and more carefully when we see the world in this distorted and confounding way. Dreams can be very significant to many different people. Personally, I think that they should be important to everyone. There is no reason to not be invested in our deeper thoughts that come alive in intricate stories and images; our unconscious trying to break through a barrier of the conscious.

Different beliefs about dreams have crazy stories from thousands of years ago. It was thought by the early Judeo-Christians that God was “communicating his intentions via certain prophets to his human subjects.”⁶ Also, in the art world dreams began to be explored into artist's work such as, Salvador Dali, Max Ernst, and Rene Magritte. In the 1920s surrealism was a movement when artists began to step away from realistic work and considered more visual artwork and writing. “Surrealists through their wild paintings showed that dreaming was a more authentic state of consciousness than waking”.⁷ This movement and realization that dreams spark our imagination and deeper thoughts has impacted the art world in such a strong way. Being an artist myself, my dreams constantly crawl back to me in my work, and they play a large role in my imagination and creativity.

The Persistence of Memory - Salvador Dali



More specifically, Salvador Dali's painting is an example of artists using their dreams in their work. Dali described his work as “hand painted dream photographs”.⁸ Salvador Dali would self-induce hallucinations in order to access the subconscious before he made art. He was also very interested in Sigmund Freud's philosophies. Sigmund Freud shared his writings on psychology and he changed the way people thought about the mind and the subconscious. To Freud, dreams are coded messages from the

⁵ “Lauri Loewenberg.” *Sharecare*, www.sharecare.com/user/lauri-loewenberg.

⁶ *Dreaming and Intro to the Science of Sleep* by J.Allan Hobson (23)

⁷ *Dreaming and Intro to the Science of Sleep* by J.Allan Hobson (31)

⁸ “MoMA Learning.” *MoMA | Salvador Dali. The Persistence of Memory. 1931*, www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/1168-2.

subconscious, and Surrealist artists like Dali were interested in what could be revealed by their dreams. They sought further into their interests and began creating work that was a lot different than art before people explored working with their dreams and different perspectives. Deirdre Barrett offers examples of the world's most creative practitioners in art, music, film, science, literature and other fields which have used the revelations of their dream life to inform their work, in their book *The Committee of Sleep*.

The book *The Committee of Sleep* by Deirdre Barrett talks about sleep as if it is a functioning system, or “committee” that helps us solve our problems or ignite ideas. John Steinbeck said “it is a common experience that a problem difficult at night is resolved in the morning after the committee of sleep has worked on it”⁹. This is something everyone knows; ideas, inspiration, and answers come to us when we dream. When you put your mind to rest and set worries or queries aside, it is known that sleep will help you conclude your troubles and questions. This is why dreams should not be disregarded and should be more important to individuals. They are highly personal and have the most significance to the individual dreaming them. The book *The Committee of Sleep* also discusses many creative and moving processes that came about from dreaming.

I can not stress enough how eloquent dreams are for the creative world and how many impactful movements, periods, and realizations in this world have been based off of dreams. Again, in *The Committee of Sleep*, many of these movements, periods, and realizations are discussed. Salvador Dali wasn't and other artists were not the only ones to use their dreams in reality by building the startling new genre of surrealism. Many film makers base their films off of dreams. "Twice I have transferred dreams to film exactly as I had dreamed them," confides Ingmar Bergman, as have many other filmmakers such as Federico Fellini, Orson Welles, Akira Kurosawa, Robert Altman, and John Sayles. Gandhi translated his dream of resistance into a well-known movement that changed the world. Also, in the science world, physiologist Otto Loewi dreamed about the medical experiment that earned him his Nobel Prize. Chemist Kekule had the realization of the structure of the benzene molecule as hexagonal rather than straight after dreaming of a snake and relating the molecule to this dream.¹⁰ Dreams even play a role in sports and motivation. Marion Jones dreamed she'd broken a world record, then brought the dream to life.

Personally, I am much more inspired by my dream world rather than my conscious one, even though all the ideas and experiences come from the same place. However, dreaming has allowed me to think differently about certain things and view things abnormally. My imagination and creativity becomes much more vivid and radiant which reflects in my work whether it's my artwork or writing. Also, I notice that my dreams spark conversation which allow me to connect with people on deeper levels and connect through personal complex conversations.

The capability of the human mind is something not to be ignored. Our deeper thoughts and emotions dreaming have the ability to spark new ideas, conclude scenarios, or seek help for trapped feelings or tough situations. The mind is a complex topic, scientists, philosophers, and psychologists will continue to talk about it and conduct researches trying to get a better understanding of the unknown. Our dream world is so much more powerful than our reality.

⁹ “The ‘Committee of Sleep’: A Study of Dream Incubation for Problem Solving .” *As Dreams*, www.asdreams.org/journal/articles/barrett3-2.htm+.

¹⁰ Barrett, Deirdre, et al. “The Committee of Sleep.” *By Deirdre Barrett*, www.goodreads.com/book/show/1329800.The_Committee_of_Sleep.

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