

Option 10: Automatism and dream narrative in video

Artist statement:

Based on a memorable dream I had in the last few weeks, this video project seeks to express the form of automatism that came to my mind in the dream. Through this documentation and representation of the visuals that were seen and remembered, I embark on a journey of self-exploration into my deeper feelings.

Link (Silent video): “Eye of the beholder”

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Vu_y8_fsk5DiBg0dXl8kkOpnvnSJPbZk

Essay:

An exploration into my unconscious.

As someone who strives to live by logic and rationality in daily life, I rarely utilize or even explore my unconscious thoughts, preferring to suppress them when dealing with challenges and

reverting to conscious deductions when making decisions. Hence, upon learning about automatism and dream narratives in this class, I decided to explore the option of automatism in a dream narrative as a means to be more acquainted with my own thoughts and feelings through the stories they may tell me.

To begin this project, I started a dream journal to help me record and remember the dreams I was having, hoping to create an artwork based on automatism of the brain in a dream. I had never recorded my dreams in any way before, hence this was a very special journey into my unconscious.

At least for my dreams, it is rather astonishing how they would structure themselves in the form of narratives, even if the narratives they form are seemingly irrational and random.

I am someone who usually has no recollection of my dreams, some of which I still have no recollection of even though they were written down in my journal. But with the ones that I do remember, I discovered how interconnected the elements in my dreams are to my hobbies and daily experiences. I would dream about films that I had watched, photography, my family, my friends, and my desires. But most interesting of which was a dream about me waking up and writing down another dream on a tiny notepad instead of on my phone. This really goes to indicate how intricate my subconscious is in picking up from my daily thoughts and habits.

In doing this artwork, I attempted to preserve what I originally saw and felt as much as possible in order to allow free interpretation of the contents, only utilizing representation where necessary within constraints in practicality. Only after this artwork is complete do I begin reflection of the images.

While experiencing the dream represented in the video, I had a sense of claustrophobia and necessity to achieve a goal that I could visualize, yet something was trapping me in a never-

ending ascent and descent within stairs with a few people that I could not navigate beyond, all the while having several people watching and judging me for my performance in climbing those stairs.

Finally, as if a glimpse into the future, I saw an old man finally able to exit the stairs, but instead entering a realm opposite to what I had strived towards.

With help from the Freudian interpretation of dreams (Freud, 2010), I reflected upon how this dream may represent my experiences and wants. Given a recent project from another class in which I expressed a challenge to authority and social norms, and what has happened in Hong Kong in the past year, I believe that there is a wish for me to escape from the current social situation, yet unable to untangle myself from it, being trapped in societal constraints while being insecure and constantly judged by superiors and peers at work, at school, and at home. Even though I had pondered some these questions prior, I had not come to realize the extent of impact they have on me.

Being skeptical on the idea of irrational dream narratives prior to this class, this experiment in this subject has certainly deepened my understanding into surrealist artworks and complex narratives such as the movie *Inception*. I now view these as a dive into a part of the mind, seeking to unravel underlying thoughts not normally experienced.

References:

Freud, Sigmund (2010). *The interpretation of dreams*. Starchey, James. New York: Basic Books A Member of the Perseus Books Group.