

A...kademie der bildenden Künste Wien Exhibit Galerie Sleepy Politics: How to learn about conviviality and alternative life forms through sleep 22.3.–21.5.2023

### With works by

Black Power Naps (Fannie Sosa & Niv Acosta), Mustafa Emin Büyükcoşkun & Osman Özarslan, Hannah Cooke, Emil Frederking & Lisa Starmans, Stella Geppert, Inside Job (Ula Lucińska & Michał Knychaus), Jannis Neumann, Cristina Díaz Moreno & Efrén García Grinda, Unstable Bodies (Christian Freude, Christina Jauernik, Johann Lurf, Jonathan Moser, Fabian Puttinger, Rüdiger Suppin), Anna Watzinger

### Curated by

Francesca Romana Audretsch and Lotti Brockmann

# Gettin' Out of Bed is Overrated



Stand and hold yourself while holding someone else. Learn how the you of your body and me of mine work our mutual instability together. Learn how the instability of holding while moving is a moment. Learn that to move is to hold a we.¹ –Park McArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos

Dear visitors of Sleepy Politics: How to learn about conviviality and alternative life forms through sleep, we welcome you to join us and eleven artistic positions on a sleepy fieldtrip for new ways of living and solidarity-based forms of togetherness. In the spheres of possibility between sleep, society, and nature, for us, the curators Francesca Romana Audretsch and Lotti Brockmann, the exhibition Sleepy Politics is a lullaby yet a wakeup call from deep sleep. For us, sleep is a communication form of perceptible care that arises from methods of collective imagination, intimate transformation, and diverse regeneration. The exhibition offers a platform for an artistic discourse, addressing the multi-faceted appearance of sleeping bodies. Thus, a space is created where the emancipatory shaping of coexistence is negotiated.

In the exhibition, artistic interventions and curatorial practices meet to develop a creative and autonomous interaction. The artistic positions make the exhibition a place of encounter for sleep and awakening, rest and movement, dreamlike absence and constant disposition. Therefore, sleep becomes a scene for debating political

affairs and practices of resistance. In this way, the question of sleep simultaneously addresses the question of justice and challenges the validity of privileges and hierarchical norms within our society. Indeed, the temporal and spatial conditions of the human need for sleep are dependent on the social and economic accesses to active life.

The 72-year-old Canadian poet and essayist Anne Carson begins her poem *Ode to Sleep* with the sentence: »Think of your life without it«. Carson understands sleep as an intrinsic part of life because, like the feeling of hunger or thirst, it is a basic physiological need and, consequently, inseparable from the well-being of human, non-human, and ecological beings. <u>Black Power Naps</u> shows that sleep can be political as it is intimate. <u>Niv Acosta and Fannie Sosa</u> dedicate themself to the sleep gap phenomenon as the starting point of their artistic work. Studies by the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention are showing that Black people sleep less and much worse than White Americans do. Therefore, it is impossible to imagine white supremacy without an imbalance of sleep.

In the cinematic documentary *Front Lines Of All Kinds*, the performance-enhancing and system-stabilising power nap which has recently become fashionable experiences a reassessment of structural disadvantage and social injustice. *Radical rest!* is a social movement concentrating on regenerative practices and experimental spaces that aim to close the sleep gap within the black diaspora. *Radical rest!* seeks collective dreaming for collective healing.

The white fathers told us, I think. Therefore, I am. The black mother within each of us – the poet – whispers in our dreams: I feel, therefore, I can be free.<sup>2</sup> –Audrey Lorde

With her work *Lay Flat*, the artist <u>Hannah Cooke</u> invites you to understand sleep, loafing, and doing nothing as a practice of resistance. Her work is engaged with the Chinese protest movement Tang Ping (lying flat). Here, young Chinese people withdraw themself from the 996-System (working from nine in the morning until nine in the evening six days a week) through idleness. The quiet

protest of lying down makes humans useless for the exploitative factories, which form their place of work. Although labour rejection is not a new phenomenon, with half a billion clicks on social media Tang Ping achieved new visibility and is a movement with global resonance.

In her work IMMERSION (collective), the artist Stella Geppert is engaged with phases of falling asleep and waking up. Using micromovements, the increased daytime movements of her body are transformed into the form of an increasingly resting body that devotes itself to the inner times of the organs. In doing so, the artist refers to forms of knowledge such as the organ clock, which originated in traditional Chinese medicine around 5,000 years ago and examined organs for their working and resting times. It states that organs such as the stomach or liver are particularly active at different times of the day and night. Even every cell has its inner clock. States of being such as void, calmness, serenity, apathy, silence, vastness, and doing nothing are the balance of heaven and earth and accompany the artist like a root of countless living beings and their effective power. In addition to the exhibit, a performance will take place throughout the exhibition: sleepiness will slowly ripple through the space and become a collective moment of drowsiness that spreads from one person to the next.

According to sleep research, humans sleep through one third of their lifetime. This statement can be quite sobering when capitalism perceives individual time as a resource, diminishing our sleep phases further and further. The sleeping body becomes a lazy antagonist, and the otherwise hard-working body appears useless in the neoliberal ideology. For many people, this leads to chronic and systematic sleep deprivation because they suffer from sleeplessness and night-time work. Therefore, the resulting societal, collective disease patterns are the symptoms of burnout and an exhausted society.

I can't get no sleep. I can't get no sleep. I used to worry, though I was going mad in a hurry. Getting' stressed, makin excess mess in darkness. No electricity, something's all over me, greasy insomnia, please release me...<sup>3</sup> –Faithless

Thanks to the worldwide success of the remix by DJ legend Avicii († 2018), the song *Insomnia* experienced an enormous club revival. The title of Anna Watzingers room installation also names this pathological sleep disorder. With INSOMNIA 2.0 Dinge Denken Daten Dämonen, she is referring to the multiple and ambivalent experiences of literally being in bed. In reference to her biography. those experiences turn out to be a regulative and dominant moment in her appearance and shape of life. Through certain chronicle and recurring patterns of illness, for Anna Watzinger the bed temporally becomes the centre of life, the »Weltenmitte«. Productive working processes and the feeling of powerlessness are meeting on the same page, and in the sense of a statement from the philosopher Vilém Flusser: »Es ist Mitte zahlloser Welten«, the bed becomes an ambiguous object. The biorhythms of our bodies determine the hormone level, growth, body temperature, heart rate, and the concentration of immune cells inside our blood. A good portion of sleep ensures lower blood pressure, allows the microbiome in the gut to thrive. regulates appetite, and thus our body weight. In an ever-accelerating achievement-oriented society, tiredness simultaneously isn't recognised and thereby leads to isolation. Sleeping bodies are organisms embedded in collectives of bodies constructed by rules, norms, and social conventions. The rhythmicity of different sleep cycles structures one's waking life. Thereby, the rationalising course of time based on linear processes interferes more and more with the body-related rhythms. Consequently, our sense of community is increasingly lost and loneliness becomes a pathological phenomenon. How can sleeping become not an individual, but a collective and thus political matter?

We attribute what results from external constraints to an essential need. He who rises at six in the morning because he is rhythmed in this way by his work is perhaps still sleepy and in need of sleep. Doesn't this interaction of the repetitive and the rhythmic sooner or later give rise to the dispossession of the body?<sup>4</sup> –Henri Lefebvre and Catherine Régulier

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Our sleeping bodies are also being colonised by capitalist logics throughout. Accordingly, individualised and coordinated solutions are offered on the market for such problems and disease patterns as sleep disorders or simply a lack of sleep: products, apps, and tools are supposed to optimise our sleep behaviour. However, the social time policies that cause such problems in the first place are lost from sight in favour of a capitalist appropriation of sleep.

The product Ohropax, invented in 1907, should have decreased the noise of industrialisation and the First World War. They are still among the world's most successful sleep hygiene products and reliably give people a restful night's sleep. In the room-invasive installation *Oropace* of Emil Frederking and Lisa Starmans, mass production doesn't find inside the ear conch of humans. Still, it expands its ability from hearing protection to a room-grabbing sound-damping. Around 80,000 small, neon-coloured, soft, and feather-light foam nubs were sent to the artists Emil Frederking and Lisa Starmans free of charge for their installation because even at the epicentre of the world of tranquillity B-ware is being sorted out. Variously arranged earplugs result in an organic, rhizomatic, and mushroom-like structure that creeps out ventilation shafts and gradually settles the exhibition room.

While sleeping, we come to terms with what we learned during awake life. Therefore, sleep is one of the essential tools to store unconscious (and alternative) memories. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, an American anthropologist and author of the book »The Mushroom at the End of the World«, presents the opinion that all biological processes (large and small, from the evolution of non-humans, and plant species to our sleeping cycles or the bacteria in our bowl) have a phase in their life where they rest to regenerate and renew. The artistic research group <u>Unstable Bodies</u> deals with the symbiotic collaboration between humans and animals during a three-year interdisciplinary project phase. They are particularly interested in how these collaborations as a sensory room can be aesthetically noticed. A pea forms the centre of the work *Planting Hypnos*, a faithful companion in the project which attains a particular agency. In a laboratory-like and simultaneously cosmic-seeming setting, a

sodium vapour lamp sets the pea in scene. Formerly, the sodium vapour lamp has been used in greenhouses and traffic lights. In the exhibition, the process of the artwork's permanent exposure of the legume becomes visible and provokes associations with celestial bodies and moon phases through its composition. Sleep is no longer a process in which humans, animals, and plants stay separated. Instead, as the artistic research group Unstable Bodies shows, the conditions of the Anthropocene demand that an interspecies empathy must be developed to address the ecological crisis of our time.

In his multimedia installation *One more time & Put me to sleep*, the biologist and artist <u>Jannis Neumann</u> explores non-human sleep. Here, he depicts the sleeping phase of the plant Colchicum autumnale (autumn crocus). Originally from Asia, the poisonous plant leads to death for humans and animals in 90 % of all cases. In his drawing *One more time* the artist picks up the queer, poly-vegetative sleeping behaviour of the plant. Starting from a late Gothic woodcut in which the autumn crocus is shown simultaneously with his blossom and leaves, Jannis Neumann is developing a series of drawings where the original painting is repainted with botanical accuracy.

The title Put me to sleep refers to the various aroma diffusers that might induce a fog in the room by means of different sleep-promoting substances. Artificial abscisic acid for the plants is mixed with natural lavender oil for the human body. The olfactory impression that the aroma diffuser provides offers a different semantic approach to rethink the relationship between human and botanical sleep. The piece questions the supposedly modern worldview determined by the distinction between nature and culture. Throughout Jannis Neumann's work, the political question arises: why do we let such a fundamentalist distinction predetermine our thinking and acting? Inside Job (Ula Lucińska and Michał Knychaus) also devote themselves to the non-human sleep cycle as a starting point for speculative storytelling about the future in their spatial installation Possibility we are poisoned. The story includes fragments from the poems of Diane di Prima, Hélène Cixous, Marina Tsvetaeva, Patrícia Rehder Galvão, Sylvia Plath, and Maria Sabina. Here, fictive seeds awake after years of sleep, start to grow, and in this way, influence

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their surrounding habitats. The fictive seeds are similar to old fossils or remains of extra-terrestrial forms. They indirectly refer to herbal organisms that produce sleeping seeds in changing climates. Germinal dormancy is a characteristic of plants acquired through evolution. It allows them to survive under unfavourable conditions and is therefore necessary for the propagation of new species and the successful spread of existing species.

A Ban of Sleep is a Ban of Life.<sup>5</sup> –Slogan from the Freedom Sleepers of Santa Cruz, California

From an architectonical and urban policy perspective the artists Cristina Díaz Moreno and Efrén García Grinda strike up for a speculative future with their work NOCTURNALIA: A civilisation without homes. In their practice, they investigate the intersection of architecture, urban development, and nature in changing climate circumstances. Coming from Madrid, the architect's duo presents a flag that shows digital scenarios of the futuristic town Nocturnalia. Here, you will neither find houses nor flats or apartments. Every evening the 25.000 inhabitants execute the same community ritual: they practice a fragmented, poly-phasic form of sleep, a medieval custom in which the time of rest is subdivided into different phases and, there fore, serves for the creative connection between dream and waking life. Public sleeping is no longer marginalised but, on the flip side, has self-evidently slipped into the consciousness of society. The aggregation of multiple sleeping bodies reminds one of a utopian. collage of images of political protest camps. There, the collective sleeping and the vulnerability that comes with it is practised to anticipate, in the present, an anti-capitalistic and non-profit mode of futuristic living.

The Turkish artist and filmmaker Mustafa Emin Büyükcoşkun and the sociologist, butcher, baker, and treasure hunter Osman Özarslanshow a dual-channel film installation Wretcheds, Hermits, Rebels which searches for forms of imaginative political power in the loneliness of the Sufi culture of pre-modernity. From classic literature to miniature painting the essayistic film seeks forms of imagination

through sleep, sluggishness, and slowness. With a site-specific installation starting from the imperial history of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, the work scrutinises how we could unlearn our current relationship to sleep and how this relationship could be redesigned through revisiting particular examples in pre-colonial histories. The many layers of the exhibition become visible through the artistic, scientific, and somatic engagement with the sleeping body. Sleepy Politics is accompanied by the study program Bodies of Sleep where narratives and engagements with sleeping bodies are examined. Together with you, we want to try out now allow

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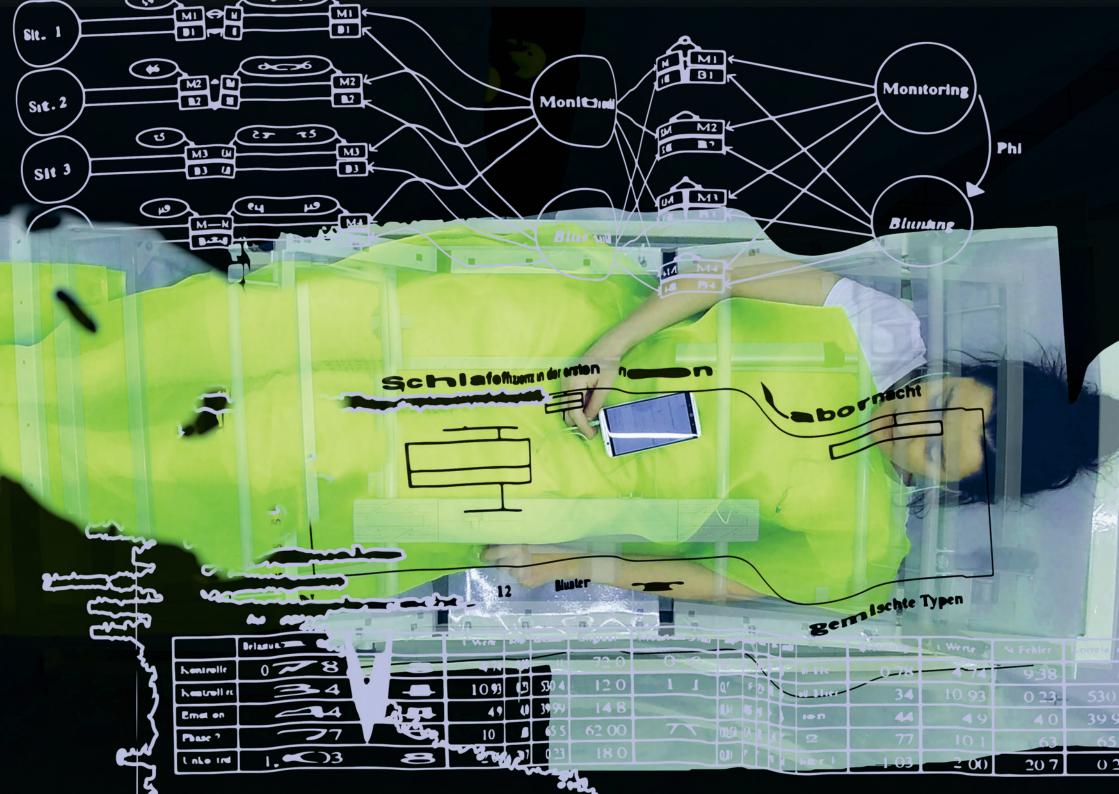








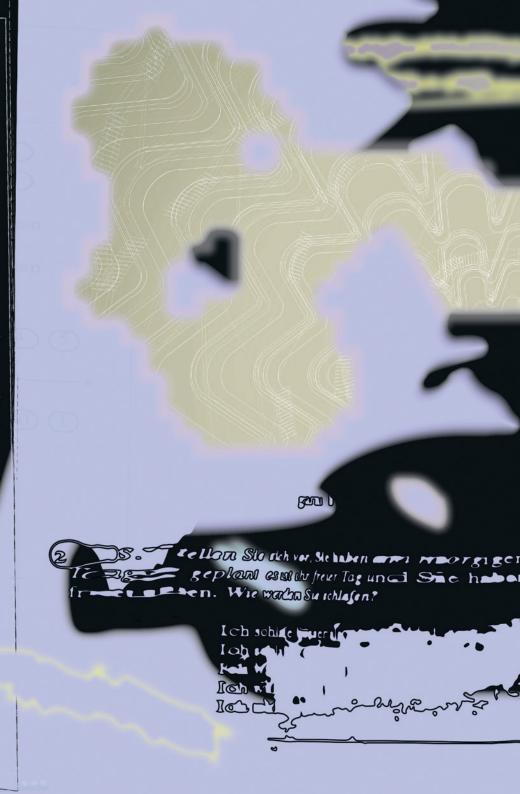


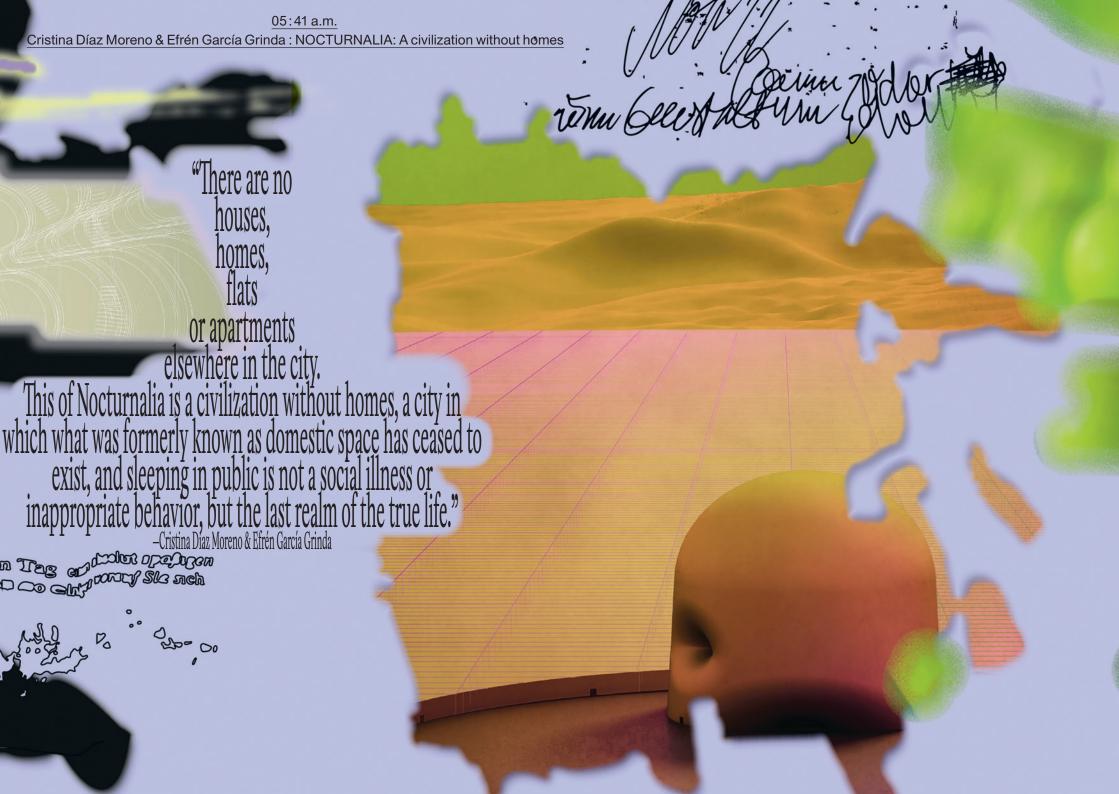


# Schlaffragebogen

Bitte kreuzen Sie die Aussagen an, welche am besten ihr Schlafverhalten beschreiben.

Uhrzeit, zu der Sie i.d.R. ins Bett gehen:	
Uhrzeit, zu der Sie normal aufstehen:	
Wie lange brauchen Sie in <i>der</i> Regel zum Einschlafen?	Minuten
Wie lange brauchen Sie meist zum Aufstehen nach dem Aufwachen?	Minuten
Wie oft wachen Sie nachts auf?	12345
Ist ihr Schlafrhytmus in der Regel der gleiche oder variiert es viel?	<b>*</b>
	2 0 7 12 40 1
Schlafen Sie in ungewohnter Umgebung gleich gut?	ja ne
Machen Sie sich schwere Gedanken vor dem Einschlafen?	ja ne
Hinterfragen Sie beim Aufwachen alles?	,···
Wenn Sie nachts aufwachen, würden Sie dann lieber weiter schlafen oder ausgehen?	1 2 beides
Was ist ihre ideale Schlafzeit?	Minuten
Sind Sie ein Murmeltier	(beides)













Stellen Sie sich folgendes Szenario vor. Sie fliegen in den Urlaub. Nach einem langen Reisetag kommen Sie in ihrer Übernachtungsmöglichkeit an. Ihr Zimmer liegt mit dem Fenster raus zum partystrand. Wie werder. Sie schlafen?  Ich schlafe besser als zu Hause Ich schlafe genauso wie zu Hause Ich wache zweimal in der Nacht auf Ich wühle mich die ganze herum Ich schlafe garnicht	Describe your dream during the exhibition:	OD:MM:YYYY : :  (Sleep) Hrs:Mi : :  Quality  ©12345  Drear  Oy
Stellen Sie sich vor, Sie haben am morgigen Tag einen absolut spaßigen Tag geplant, es ist ihr freier Tag und Sie haben so einiges worauf Sie sich freuen. Wie werden Sie schlafen?  Ich schlafe besser als an einem Arbeitstag Ich schlafe genauso wie immer Ich wache einmal in der Nacht auf Ich wühle mich die ganze herum Ich schlafe garnicht		
3 Stellen Sie sich vor, morgen Sie wissen von einer glaubhaften Quelle, das: morgen die Welt ein Ende nehmen wird. Was tun Sie?  Ich versuche mir einzureden, dass es nicht stimmt und zwinge mich zu meiner normalen Einschlafroutine.  Ich hyperventiliere und telefoniere die ganze Nacht mit einer Freundin.  Ich packe meine Sachen und fahre Zu meiner Mutter.  Ich trommel meine ganzen Freundinnen zusammen und wir machen die ganze Nacht Party, die letzte Nacht meines Lebens will ich nicht verschlafen.  Ich bin die ganze Nacht im Internet und checke ob es wirklich stimmt.		

# Bodies of Sleep Lecture series

The exhibition *Sleepy Politics* will be accompanied by the the teaching assignment *Bodies of Sleep* during the summer semester of 2023. Different narratives and debates about sleeping bodies will be examined in a seminar with a three blocks schedule and beyond that, the multi-layeredness of these body characteristics will be tested through artistic and scientific positions.

All ectures will be open to the public. Dreamers interested in the workshops but not enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna are welcome to register via sleep/politics@proton.me up to one week before the event begins.

### Block 1

#### Conversation

Tue, 21.3.2023, 16–17 h

Lola Olufemi is a Black feminist writer
and researcher from London and Christie

Costello is an art historian, artist, and
writer, both part of the bare minimum
collective. This collective believes in doing
nothing, or at the very least, as little as
required of us.

#### Workshop

· Fri. 24.3.2023. 14-19 h

Workshop\_Laziness clears space for us to be with one another, to become rich in need. Using collective reading, free writing, and discussion this experimental workshop will explore the relational possibilities inherent in anti-work politics. This workshop will enable participants to identify and write back to the structures and systems that alienate, exhaust, suppress, and tire them. No prior preparation is required.

#### Block 2

#### Lecture

· Thur. 20.4.2023. 18-19:30 h

Mia Imani Harrison is an international interdisciplinary artivist and arts writer. She interrogates the ways communities can heal individual, communal, and societal trauma by creating works that live in between the worlds of art and science.

#### Workshop

· Fri, 21.4.2023, 10–18 h

Workshop\_The workshop will be both educational and experiential. This work is about returning to the power of their own dreams by introducing them to practices and rituals that are embodied and rooted in new and ancestral traditions. We will map our collective viewpoints on dreams as they are depicted in our communities, mass media, and our families while unpacking our relationships with the dreamscape and rest in general. We won't be relying on external texts. Instead, we will look at our own dream journals and the themes that have come up.

#### Block 3

#### Lecture

· Thur, 27.4.2023, 18 – 19:30 h

Eva Koťátková is a contemporary artist based in Prague, Czech Republic. She is the co-founder of the platform Institute of Anxiety, which creates a space for collaboration between artists, theorists, and activists.

#### Workshop

· Fri, 28.4.2023, 10–18 h

Workshop\_How to awaken the body and its senses so that it can connect, sleep, dream, and act more directly, effectively, deeply? How can we use dreaming not as a way of escapism but as a critical tool through which to reimagine the world as it is now into the world we want it to be? How could such class of awakening the senses and the class of daydreaming look like?

## Curators

Francesca Romana Audretsch is a curator, scenographer, art mediator, radio moderator, and writer. Her work focuses on political ecologies from an intersectional and queer-feminist perspective. She is a deep sleeper, curious researcher, restless thinker, and creative designer whose artistic practice and critical thinking address body reflection, gender politics, and sustainable and solidarity-based common grounds. Francesca Romana works enthusiastically in collective communities, in which the methods of rest and care are discussed. and she develops many-layered approaches to conscious, sustainable coexistence. Francesca Romana researches and develops action practices in art education within exhibition spaces. She understands curating as a processual action that opens up new autonomous spaces of possibility, challenging the existing capitalist organisation of life and work and rethinking social constructs. Francesca Romana, called Frank, Franny and many other nicknames, works across the borders of contemporary art, curatorial practice, independent publishing, free writing, STS and critical art & culture studies.

Lotti Brockmann works in the nuances between theory and practice. Her diverse interests find their intersections in the fields of cultural practices, collective imaginaries, and public spaces. Growing up in a socio-political environment where art is a privilege, the artist looks at artistic and curatorial practice from a perspective that asks what cultural values are institutionally transmitted. She dreams of a world in which artistic and curatorial practice guestions dominant forms of knowledge and in which art creates participative and affective spaces for exchange and learning. Coming from the Wadden Sea, Lotti Brockmann is - like the ebb and flow of the tide - always in process, balancing the in-between. By observing the tides, she learned to reflect critically on topics such as biological and cultural time structures, which can also be found in the phenomenon of sleep. The curator and artist understands sleep as an intimate and horizontal practice affecting every living being. As she tosses and turns from one side of the bed to the other in the night, she murmurs words like building bridges, forming cross-species alliances, and developing strategies for societal transformation. In her dreams, she subconsciously searches for queer-feminist solutions to confront current social, political, and ecological crises through (artistic and curatorial) practice.

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  Translation to English: »world centre«.
- 5 Ebd. Translation to English: »It is the centre of countless worlds.«
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- 7 Slogan from the Freedom Sleepers of Santa Cruz. California

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- 02:01 a.m. Paret, Rudi (Übers., 2012): *Der Koran*. Stuttgart: Kolhammer. 18:11.
- 02:33 a.m. Neumann, Jannis: Quote from the artist.
- 03:57 a.m. Lefebvre, Henri (1992/2004): Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life. New York: Continuum, 17.
- 04:16 a.m. Colomina, Beatriz; Rumpfhuber, Andreas; Ruhs, August (2014): *The Century of the Bed.* Vienna: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 18.
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#### Exhibited works

Black Power Naps (Fannie Sosa & Niv Acosta) Front Lines of All Kinds, 2020 Video, color, sound 22 min. Courtesy of the artists

Mustafa Emin Büyükcoşkun &
Osman Özarslan
Wretcheds, Hermits, Rebels, 2023
2-channel video installation, color, sound
30 min.
Courtesy of the artists

Hannah Cooke

Lay Flat, 2023

100% new wool, hand tufted, sound ø 180 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Stella Geppert

IMMERSION (collective), 2021

Silicon imprint on linen, hard foam

160 × 225 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Inside Job (Ula Lucińska & Michał Knychaus)

Possibility we are poisoned, 2021

3-channel video installation with sound, sculptural objects

Dimensions variable

09:35 min.

Courtesy of the artists and International
Centre of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana

help with 3D animations: Kuba Matuszczak

Cristina Díaz Moreno &
Efrén García Grinda
Nocturnalia Flag
Digital print on acrylic fabric
175 × 230 cm
Courtesy of the artists

Nocturnalia scenes
Digital print on aluminium
4 pieces, each 40 × 40 cm
Courtesy of the artists

Jannis Neumann
One more time, 2023
Color pencil, pencil, acrylic, inkjet print on paper
Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

Put me to sleep, 2023
Installation from various materials; diffuser, phytohormones, lavender oil, distilled water, cable, timer switch, wood, plastic Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Lisa Starmans & Emil Frederking

Oropace, 2023

Ear plugs on paper chaché
7 parts each 100 × 150 × 100 cm
2 parts each 150 × 150 × 100 cm

Courtesy of the artists

Unstable Bodies (Christian Freude,

Christina Jauernik, Johann Lurf,
Jonathan Moser, Fabian Puttinger,
Rüdiger Suppin)

Planting Hypnos, 2023

Projection, wood, lamp, watering system,
screen, optics, power unit, pea
3,5 × 1,4 × 1,7 m

A project lead by Wolfgang Tschapeller
of the Institute for Art and Architecture,
Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, funded by
Austrian Science Fund (FWF): AR574

Anna Watzinger
INSOMNIA 2.0\_Dinge Denken Daten
Dämonen, 2020
Sensorial installation, physically
experienceable
Usable, 4-way motorized, electronically
"hacked" and formally modified patient
care bed(frame) made of painted steel
with 5-way split "mattress" made of PVC
film. Body screen/bed cover. Surveillance
monitor video composition/projection
Dimesions variable
Courtesy of the artist

A...kademie der bildenden Künste Wien Exhibit Galerie Sleepy Politics: How to learn about conviviality and alternative life forms through sleep 22.3.–21.5.2023

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Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

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