

## Shadows of Dreams: ephemeral works in the public realm

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“We are dreams of ourselves souls by gleams, And to each to each other dreams of others’ dreams”

- Fernando Pessoa

How does memory and the real time of our expanding digital age converge upon the world of dreams? It can be argued that dreams are substituted for action, as so often in real time imparting a residual depiction of shadow, almost as if a reminder to the solitude of encroaching Greenwich time. The mythic imagination of the real, the ambient and the fantastical historically opens up a world of discovery. What is it to dream? Galileo discovered that we are not the center of our universe; Darwin discovered that we are not the center of world creation. Freud argued that dreams are wish fulfillments. The space of the urban street, a shifting place of the artist at work opens up a simultaneous discovery that the private returns to public in the space of the city as we continue to daydream in our walking the city.

Artists who work in the space of the city expand the context of typical urban daily experiences. Art in public space recreates the experience of the mundane built world. Shadows of dreams are real; light is balanced through chiaroscuro and the memory of the real. It is our inner ambition and chance that can mark the suggestion of decoding the mythical from the mundane. Chicago artist Paola Cabal works in the transient media of light and memory. Indelible, the way the sun moves across the sky creates the patterns and marks of our daily lives, the artist recreates the shadows and cast light with spray paint, offering an ephemeral memorial. Civic structures are marked, underpass, the pedestrian right of way, an overlooked wall, the



*In the fluidity of felt water there are sentences without meaning softly flowing and forgetting ones self, Kirsten Leenars, video still*

silent and traversed transition spaces of the disregarded are surfaces in which these studies of the city light and shadow begin to offer pause to passerby. Real time is marked with memory, a falsetto language of painting that affords a modernist tromp l'oeil to the action of the artist in the city. Recording the real by rendering a public memoriam for those who witness the tension of expecting the unexpected with

Cabal's work. Our Freudian memories are directed by the mapping of the ephemeral, the transient, into real time. The artist memorializes the action of the graffiti artist, creating a poetic gesture to the mundane and forgotten aspects of public space. Light and shadow as an experience with guerrilla swat team command. A subtle recording of analog time, it is up to the viewer to decipher the real in our daily

circumambulation in the city.

It can be argued that the world of dreams are allowed the space of fantasy and reality, a gambit from the inertia of moving human inner desires causes us to question the sanctity and meaning of real time movies in our dream state. What is the future of dreams, if we map our digital identities into every moment in which we live. These questions and identities lead the imagined, the questioned and us to reinterpret the reality of the real. Walter Benjamin honored the allegorical ideas that, "The storyteller takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others" Who can create the reality check that the space of a time fractured society does not allow?

Kirsten Leenars, works in the public zone of the past, present and future. As an artist working in the public space of the imagination, she reinterprets the fantasy into the real, casting the occupant as a viewer to navigate the space of their dreams. Dreams are the real space where truth is rendered as comical, cardboard is concrete; colors are hand painted with glitter and candy as we fly across the physical space of a private domain. Leenars composes, the set, the action and the space in which to relive the moment of the magical, a fantasy to confront the real are transfixed upon indelible memory and space. The art experience requires the cooperation and the narration of the subject, and the easy listening of the artist. The edge of acting as a "go between" from real to fantasy in the space of the public domain, where bedroom meets the space of street.

Dreams never really fade, these two Chicago based artists offer us into the shadowy place of our memory and the touchstone of the place that we sometimes long to be, yet – somehow need the excuse, the trade out that we are allowed

to enter the arena again and again, if only for awhile. In an age determined by digital escape, what happens to the ability to dream, the restless urban walk without immediate engagement in motion with electronics? Cabal allows the moment to be recorded for almost eternity, a study of the city space – where light and shadow are momentary and always moving. Walter Benjamin might argue for the sanctity of who owns the public space of where we walk? Leenars composes the fantasy and flight of unconsciousness state into a dream world of the real, where social space allows the freedom of pedestrian expansion. Both Cabal and Leenars navigate the public space with conversation as a tool for negotiating the built world and offering a poetic vague repose to those who can participate, if only just for a moment;



*Shadow Tracing (night view), Paola Cabal*