

The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters

29 May 2017 – 30 July 2017

Curated | Olivia Kubiak

Artworks | Emilija Kasumovic, Hanah Williams, Tim Casiero, Sarah Boese
and Jack Lowe

Curatorial Statement:

I have always had an obsession with Spain's romantic artist, Francisco Goya and his concern for the fate of humanity. Goya's internal conflict came as a result of "man's duty to be rational, and of the irrational elements in nature which ma[de] this task so hard".¹ Unlike artists before him, he did not glorify war. Rather, Goya depicted torture with satire and darkness, commenting on the contradiction of humanity's inhumane and disgusting treatment of one another - and for what?

As a result, he frequently depicted themes connected with night and darkness. He was fascinated with the irrational nature of dreaming and the fact that, unlike when you are awake, when one dreams, one never knows what is going to happen. This exhibition is titled after one of my favourite pieces by Goya titled, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*. "While the artist dreams, deserted by reason, night monsters float frighteningly about him."² This etching shows Goya sleeping with his head resting on a table while surrounded by an imagined gathering of giant owl and bat-like creatures. To his side sits a peaceful, wide-eyed lynx, juxtaposing the sleeper's disturbed state of mind. These haunting creatures emerge from the unconscious.

In this exhibition, the artists have created works depicting what one sees when all reason and rational thought is abandoned. How do our dark thoughts translate into haunting nightmares when we are in insensible states? Artists guide us through how they link conscious and unconscious states of mind and reveal how unbearable monsters are created when one's imagination is abandoned by all reason. Our psychological awareness can be our biggest enemy. Imagination is the mother of art and the basis of curiosity and wonder. How are the artists haunted by these nightmares and how do these visions translate into their work?

¹ Michael, Levey, *Rococo to Revolution*, p. 202

² Ibid, p.12

Artist Statements:

Tim Casiero

I am trained as a graphic designer, having completed my Bachelor of Visual Communication (Graphic Design) at the University of South Australia, but found my passion in the art of printmaking. I particularly enjoy the tactile nature of carving relief prints from wood and lino. I am currently undertaking Visual Art Honours at UniSA where I am researching how printmaking can be used to disseminate alternative narrative. Utilising the high contrast nature of relief printing I create bold, dark imagery, drawing inspiration from tattoo flash art, folklore and the supernatural, and artists such as Jose Guadalupe Posada. As part of my craft, I seek to explore and push the limitations of relief printing.

My works draw upon Goya's theme of the unconscious mind creating irrational thoughts, which the conscious mind tries to understand. I play on what the mind tries to perceive in the dark when it can make out no rational shapes. Scale and form become subjective as do the very nature of the creatures the mind is trying to perceive. Alongside the mind's interpretation of the dark, I look at lucid dreaming and nightmares: times when the line between the subconscious and conscious mind blurs completely resulting in incomprehensible visions and experiences.

Hanah Williams

My practice focuses on creating unique state prints, installations and collections. I am interested in the characteristics of etching, variation, imperfection and repetition. My work delves into the realms of dreams, the human condition and our connection to the natural world.

This installation of prints is an on-going investigation into the anthropomorphic and magical qualities of trees. Inspired by an ever-changing dancing forest from a recurring dream, the autonomous nature of the work was driven by chance and whim. Since ancient times, the forest in which we get lost (in our dreams) has symbolized the dark, hidden and near inaccessible world of our unconscious. The deep wilderness that one enters in dream state will exit it with the strength to follow their rightful path in waking life.[1]

Jack Lowe

My name is Jack Lowe, I'm an engineering and science student who loves to draw in my spare time. As well as creating standalone artworks and illustrations, I have recently started branching out into comics. While our imaginations can be a powerful tool for construction in our lives, they can also highlight our fears and desires in uncomfortable ways. Many of my artworks seek to explore everyday concerns and anxieties; creating odd characters that reflect the real 'monsters' we meet or experience. It is this imagination without reason allows me to create strange images that, while peculiar, always seem grounded in a relatable atmosphere.

Emilija Kasumovic

Primarily, my work explores the infinite links between man and nature. Drawing from the ancient wisdom that our consciousness is universal which we are all connected with and share, I delve into the holographic dimension of human existence, which binds us with the root of all forces, and energy forms of the unknown.

Jung believed that to experience the wholeness of our being, we need to integrate the unconscious with the conscious. He described dreams as a gateway to our personal unconscious, and nightmares and bad dreams as a symbol of our 'shadow' or repressed experiences we deem unacceptable.

In these works, I explore the manifestations of our own shadow, of the many faces of nightmares and bad dreams. By recognizing nightmares as part of our own personality traits, we integrate the shadow into our being, and step out of conventional reality.

By abandoning any rational instinct to hide and run from the dark, threatening and disturbing, we allow new forms to emerge from the unknown, and let the unconscious play itself through us.

Sarah Boese

Sarah Boese is a professional illustrator, graphic designer and mural artist based in Adelaide, SA and has a Bachelor Degree in Visual Communication.

Large-scale murals and illustrating for children's literature is the focus of her creative practice. She has illustrated two children's books recently published by Scholastic in 2017. For her artwork and commercial illustrations, her preferred medium is digital painting. For her mural projects she opts for aerosol and works closely with councils and communities.

Narrative, the human figure, animals and nature influence the content of her artwork, which is often fluid, bold and vibrant.

For this exhibition, she has explored themes of dreaming, vulnerability and nostalgia to delve into the human psyche.

[1] Fraim, John, *Symbolism of Place*, (2001), accessed 14/10/13, <http://www.symbolism.org/writing/books/sp/home.html>

Find out more about the artists and their work at their websites:

Tim Casiero

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/dawnstateaus/>

Instagram: @dawnstateaus

Hanah Williams

Website: hanahw.weebly.com

Instagram: @hanahmw

Emilija Kasumovic

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/emilija.kasumovic>

Sarah Boese

Website: www.sarahboese.com.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sarahsillustrations

Instagram: @sehboese

Artwork list:

1) Tim Casiero, *We Hide in the Shadows*, 2017, 40 cm x 54 cm, Woodcut on Fabriano Rosaspina 300gsm, \$80.00

Edition of 10 unframed prints

Comment:

We hide in the Shadows is directly inspired by Goya's *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*. It draws upon the shapes one can see in the dark if they stare into it too long when. When you wake up from sleep and look into the darkness your conscious mind tries to find familiar shapes in it while, at the same time, your subconscious mind is lingering from sleep and supplies the brain with remnants of dreams leading to all sorts of shapes, figures, and creatures being perceived in the darkness. At this time form, scale, shape, and other defining elements aren't logically considered and the result is a scene of creatures of varying irrational sizes appearing from the dark.

2) Tim Casiero, *Lucid Dreams*, 2017, 29.7 cm x 42 cm, Woodcut on Fabriano Rosaspina 220gsm, \$50.00

Edition of 5 unframed prints

Comment:

Lucid dreaming is when a person tricks their body into thinking it's asleep so they can try to control or manipulate their subconscious mind with their conscious thoughts as a way to choose what they dream about. However, lucid dreaming can go wrong and turn into a nightmare, which the person experiences with hypersensitivity due to their conscious mind being active during the dream. Many people experience a form of sleep paralysis as part of the lucid dreaming where they are unable to move their bodies and limbs, heightening the fear experienced during a lucid nightmare due to the inability to move. *Lucid Dreams* depicts such an event where the dreamer is helpless to move as their lucid dream takes the form of a looming figure appearing from the shadows, reaching in to claim the dreamer's soul.

3) Tim Casiero, *Nightmares*, 2017, 29.7 cm x 42 cm, Woodcut on Fabriano Rosaspina 220gsm, \$50.00

Edition of 5 unframed prints

Comment:

Nightmares explores how people can pass on their nightmares to someone else. A person can experience a horrific nightmare then tell it in detail to their friend who will go home and experience it that night, thus the nightmare grows stronger. The nightmare is born in the subconscious mind of one person, conveyed between the conscious minds of both peoples, and then takes root in the subconscious of the second person. The serpent represents this ever-growing nightmare as it moves from victim to victim, growing stronger with the fear it brings each time it finds a new host.

4) Hanah Williams, *Botanical Daydream Series*, 2013, Etchings with rust, 1 m x 1.2 m, \$400

5) Sarah Boese, *Sedentary*, 2017, Digital painting, giclee print on German etching paper, 43 cm x 120 cm (unframed), \$590 (framed), \$290 (unframed)

Limited edition of 50

Comment

Malevolent creatures lay in wait, emerging from within the folds of an unpredictable state of mind.

6) Emilija Kasumovic, *Ominous*, 2017, mixed media on paper, 100 cm x 70 cm, \$400

Comment:

Ominous is about peeling away the layers of subconscious thought, probing into the nightmares who have taken the form of a person's thoughts and feelings. The person is freeing their mind of suppressing parts of themselves which hide and linger somewhere beneath their consciousness.

7) Emilija Kasumovic, *Shadow Reconciliation*, 2017, mixed media on paper, 100 cm x 70 cm, \$400

Comment:

Shadow Reconciliation is about reaching the place within ourselves where we suppressed memories, thoughts, feelings and dreams. It's about reconciliation with the part of ourselves that is often hidden and suppressed, and feeling that digging beneath our dreams we unravel new and unknown areas of life.

8) Emilija Kasumovic, *Apparition*, 2016, charcoal and pastel on paper, 100 cm x 70 cm, \$400

Comment:

Apparition is about delving deeply into the subconscious realm of dreams and nightmares, and allowing them to surface up into the consciousness, becoming aware of the part of ourselves that is deep within.

9) Jack Lowe, *Judgement*, 2017, print of digitally assembled and coloured collage of traditionally inked drawings, Paper size 30 cm x 40 cm, image size 19 cm x 28 cm, \$40

Additional prints available

Comment:

Real monsters. While many cultures have a strong tradition of using monsters as a metaphor for danger, often the most threatening 'monsters' are real people. People become monsters when they disregard or lose all reason. It can seem much easier to instantly judge someone than to take the time to see things from a different perspective. This image is meant to represent the potential effects these real world monsters can have on all of us.

10) Jack Lowe, *Reflection*, 2017, print of digitally coloured Indian ink drawing, Paper size 30 cm x 40 cm, image size 19 cm x 28 cm, \$40

Additional prints available

Comment:

An emotional monster. A man and the manifestation of his anxieties are presented as part of one whole. The posture and form of each reflects the other; there is no clear dividing line between what is real and what is not. We often characterise our internal struggles as 'demons' casting them as monsters we must fight against.

11) Jack Lowe, *Queen of the Sea*, 2017, print of digitally coloured Indian ink drawing, Paper size 30 cm x 40 cm, image size 19 cm x 28 cm, \$40

Additional prints available

Comment:

An imagined monster. Throughout the arts, imagined monsters are often used to communicate real world fears and anxieties in an abstract way. The Queen of the Sea is representative of this. It is a visual metaphor for the fear of nature's power, in this case specifically relating to the ocean. The portrait-like image features a lobster-esque monarch whose spiky exterior reflects the alien danger of the sea. Fear in an imaginative form.

12) Sarah Boese, *Little Horse*, 2016, Digital painting, giclee print on German etching paper, 42 cm x 59.4 cm (unframed), \$380 (framed), \$190 (unframed)

Limited edition of 50

Comment:

The nature of memories is often as malleable, unsettling and devoid of reason as dreams.