

A+E's DREAMPAK for

the
dream
turbine

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THE DREAM TURBINE

an introduction



A turbine (from the Latin ‘turbo’, meaning vortex) is a device that harnesses the kinetic energy of fluid, turning this into a rotational motion which can generate electricity or otherwise ‘work’. From windmills to waterwheels, turbomachines are a crucial part of our energy history. The Dream Turbine is a speculative, participatory turbomachine for stimulating, processing, converting and sharing sustainable and postcapitalist imaginaries.

From Earth Day to early summer 2021, A+E Collective will be taking to cyberspace and installing The Dream Turbine at The NewBridge Project. In solidarity with The NewBridge Project values of cooperation, adaptation, environmental and social justice, The Dream Turbine hopes to promote alternative, non-extractive ways of thinking, desiring, memorialising and living through various ongoing crises as individuals and collectives.

The Dream Turbine is at once a resource site and a generator of public engagement, ecological thought and re-visioning through the energising gestures of dreams. By encouraging attentive forms of dreamwork from the potential space of sleep, The Dream Turbine invites you into a mode of transfer, speculative turn, ongoingness and the tender commons of shared velocity.

In this DREAMPAK, you’ll find a practical and galvanising guide to dreaming and processing more sustainable ways of being and doing – from our sleepy commons to the lively world beyond!

the relationship
between dreaming and
sustainability



Sustainability just means the ability to be maintained at a certain level. When we talk about sustainability, we have to be careful we aren't just sustaining the status quo of consumer capitalism. The pandemic has recalibrated our relationship to material consumption and energy expenditure. We've also seen that 'going back to normal' is not a trajectory of return — our lifestyles of 2019 are no longer able to sustain 'life' as we know it — but one of adjustment, adaptation, listening and learning. These kinds of processes are already happening in our dreams.

Recording dreams is a routine act of everyday attention. At once a practice of selfunderstanding, translation, response and habit, it complements other practices of ecological noticing — from the gatherings and identifications of citizen science to local activities such as foraging, waste management, composting and changing relationships to energy usage (in everything from light fixtures to heating and digital technology). Taking ten minutes every day to process your orientation to certain objects and environments can help forge more sustainable routines and tendencies. It can also be a meditative practice to remind you what is worth saving, what kinds of living we want to engage in.

But dreaming, like ecology, is never just about individual actions and desires. Dreaming takes place in sociopolitical history, in culture. Dreaming can change the grammar of experience in a way that questions our assumptions about everyday life, desire, relationality — assumptions that are perpetuated by late capitalism. Dreaming can be a low carbon pleasure, but in paying attention to dreaming we can learn what really matters and rewire our priorities.

Dreams practice suspension. Some dreams are narrative, but even then they rarely follow the linear, Hollywood logic of climax and closure. Other dreams are more about atmosphere, affect or 'vibe'. Writing about dreams involves suspending our workaday time but also pursuing 'a condition of suspension' — that of the dream.

[Timothy Choy and Jerry Zee](#) argue that this allows us to question 'the present as an atmospheric condition' rather than an unfolding of human-centred, human-made powers and processes. Learning to occupy the atmospherics of time teaches us how we are ecologically entangled: there is parity between how dreams mutate and process images at many different scales of encounter, and how we are beings deeply in relation with the more-than-human. There is a dream logic of strange distribution and density in the fact that my driving a car releases atmospheric particles which alter the temperature and air quality around me and elsewhere. Dreams can make visible these processes and in turn, teach us to rethink our structural and personal involvements in them. Their nightly suspension allows us to see how things (animals, objects, chemicals, microscopic entities such as coronaviruses) shift between agitation and settlement at different scales, and never exist in isolation.

Dreams are ways of reading tropes, archetypes, recurring figures — often those which come with ecological significance. Dreams also teach us the pleasure of reading itself, of process over outcome. They remind us that a single moment can, in the weird logic of dreams, become a whole world. They remind us that all experience — from memory to crushes to grief — is mediated by the world around us, including film and television, books, visual art and advertising. Dreams teach us the pleasure and potential of the instant: if we cultivate the joyous attentiveness of this 'instant', we might be able to unravel the sleepwalking mode of consciousness required to survive daily life.

Dreams teach us alternative, more sustainable ways to occupy space and time. They can afford temporary escapes — glimmers of freedom from the regimes of work, domestic and otherwise labour — which don't rely on fuel-guzzling planes. They can loop back into the past or divine the future and help us to learn from successes and errors. They can happen at an impossible pace, or explode the banality of what we've come to expect.

Dreams can help us imagine worlds and desires other than capitalism's relentless focus on 'growth'. They might be sites of what Kate Soper calls ['alternative hedonism'](#), where we realise the 'displeasures of the high-speed, work-dominated, car and air-flight dependent mode of existence' and the pleasures of a more sensual, altruistic and breathable living. Dream ecology is not based on 'depriving' us of the pleasures of consumption, rather it shows up how those affordances don't always enhance our wellbeing or happiness.

If we pay attention to dreams, we pay attention to our bodies and minds. We learn how food, social media, lighting conditions, exercise, bedtime, intimacy, the news and other factors affect our dreams. With the '24/7' of late-capitalism, digital technology and what Jonathan Crary calls 'the ends of sleep' we are facing a crisis of sleep, which has serious effects on our immune system, mental health and cognitive ability. Keeping a sleep diary might help you reclaim your sleep habits and health from the relentless demands of living in capitalism.

Dreams help us to process traumas. Climate crisis, like Covid-19, is an experience of ongoing trauma and anxiety. Dreams can 'stay with the trouble', as Donna Haraway puts it. From the relative safety of our beds, 'nightmares' can show up the hidden flipside of daily life, the fears, longings, destruction and losses we can't consciously acknowledge. For some of us, climate crisis also involves an anticipatory grief, where we mourn something we know will soon be lost. Understood as global events, these crises are unevenly distributed and we will experience their traumas differently according to class, race, gender, geographical location and other striations.

While dreams have been appropriated for capitalist ideologies around productivity and success (e.g. The American Dream), in their unconscious sense, they also offer sites for processing loss, failure and estrangement. By attending to dreams, we learn how to bear, and what is possible to bear: they are insights into psychic sustainability, which takes its cue from a material world of identity, landscape and relation.

Dreams can be utopian. They change perspective; they remind us that other worlds are possible. They offer temporary flights into an 'elsewhere' which is always another version of everyday life and its atmospheres. They allow us to process the seemingly inescapable forces of the present from a speculative 'otherwise'. Importantly, they remind us that we are not entirely rational beings but governed by memory, desire and our bodies: any ecological imaginary or sustainable practice must take this into account.

Dreams are social: lockdown, work and distance often serve to isolate us from others. During times of shared (if unequal) crisis, it can be difficult to find ways of communicating your thoughts and feelings. Sharing dreams can be a way of 'checking in' with others; listening to someone tell their dreams is a generous act of attention. Processing and understanding dreams together can be an intimate, caring and unconditional mode of relation.



before you sleep

preparations

suggestions and considerations for helping
to induce a deeper dream state


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BEFORE YOU SLEEP

reminders	Verbally or mentally remind yourself you want to control your dreams is a huge help when it comes to influencing dreams. Before getting to bed, think or say to yourself, "Tonight, I want to realize I'm dreaming."
8-9 hours	Getting an adequate amount of sleep each night is vital to controlling the direction of your dreams. The stage of sleep known as REM sleep is where you tend to have the most dreams. Sleep deprivation results in a lower portion of REM sleep. Strive for 8 to 9 hours of sleep each night. This increases your ability to influence your dreams.
using your breath to become present	Around 10-20 minutes before reaching a horizontal position (or even longer if you have time), sit on the floor in a space where you have enough room to move around. In a comfortable cross-legged position, close your eyes, and take 10 deep breaths, counting 4 seconds in and 6 seconds out. Ensure your shoulders aren't hunching up to your ears, and continue to concentrate only on your breath for this time, letting et any thoughts about your day pass you by.
stretching	Once the counting has finished, continue to stay in tune with your inward and outward breaths while you stretch. You can use any combination of stretches, just try to hold each for 5 breaths, using the exhale to move deeper into the position. Below are a few suggestions:
movement A.	 <p>Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position. Bring your left arm straight up towards your left ear, lean to the right, stay upright rather than leaning forward and use your right hand on the floor for stability. Feel the stretch up the left side of your torso. Repeat on the opposite side.</p>

movement B.



Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position. Take your left hand over your head and place it on the opposite side of your head. Without pulling, use the weight of your arm and hand, take your left ear towards your left shoulder. Feel a stretch up the right side of your neck. To go deeper, slowly tilt your chin towards your chest. To go even deeper, take your right arm out twisting your palm to the ceiling.

movement C.



Place your legs straight out in front of you. Hinge from the hip, place each arm alongside your legs, palms facing upwards towards the ceiling with your chin towards your chest. Use your exhale to move your head closer to the floor, feel the stretch up your spine and into your neck.

movement D.



Sit with your legs outstretched as wide as you can comfortably sit. Lean towards each toe, chest facing upwards as much as possible, without collapsing. Again, use your exhale to deepen the stretch each time, getting slightly closer towards each foot. Repeat on the other side.

movement E.



Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position. Ensure your shoulders are away from your ears, close your eyes and bring your chin to your chest. Begin to rotate your head in half moon shapes, shining each cheek up to the ceiling before returning your chin to the chest. If you feel comfortable in doing so, take the roll to a full moon. Feel free to pause anywhere you feel tension, again using your exhale to help with the release.

INFLUENCING FACTORS

smells

It may sound basic, but the fragrance of flowers and other favorable aromas are likely to induce more pleasant dreams. So, we need be careful about what we are smelling before and during sleep, as our brain will store the fragrance and our reactions towards it and silently influence our dreams.

visuals

What you view before sleeping greatly influences our dreams. Be it watching a film or TV programme, or reading any text, anything that tells us about an experience or event, fictional or actual can induce dreams of a similar nature. Our dream may not be exactly the same, but there are greater chances that visuals or concepts may end up blended with events going on in your own life.

lucid nutrition

'Lucid nutrition' is the name given to foods and supplements alleged to induce better dreaming and dream recall. Unfortunately not a huge amount research has been done into its effects, but it's definitely worth testing the waters with.

vitamin B6

This vitamin plays a role in converting tryptophan into serotonin, which helps the brain to remain somewhat alert during the REM stage of the sleep cycle, leading to greater dream intensity and recall.

In 2002, a double-blind study revealed that participants who took a daily 250mg B6 supplement reported a significant increase in dream content - measured in vividness, bizarreness, emotionality and colour. The recommended maximum daily intake for healthy adults is 100mg, and we probably get around 1.3mg of vitamin B6 each day from the foods we eat.

Experiments by other dreamers have shown the amount of B6 needed to increase dream intensity varies from 100-500mg depending on the person. A 100mg supplement around two hours before bed for a few nights in a row is a good start, recording how it impacts your dreams.

If you don't see any benefit, increase the nightly dose. However, remember not to do this on a prolonged basis. The NHS website states that taking over 200mg a day of vitamin B6 for a long time can lead to a loss of feeling in the arms and legs known as sensory neuropathy.

Cheese & dairy

Cheese gives you nightmares. Or does it? Food science professor Milena Corredig of the University of Guelph in Canada says ripening cheese produces different quantities and types of chemicals that transmit signals to the brain. Comedian Mae Martin said that brie gave her wings and gorgonzola brought back the dead.



dinner party guests
being traded for
camels, and a
vegetarian crocodile
upset because it
could not eat
children

A 2005 study by the British Cheese Board said that the sharper the cheese, the sharper the dreams. Among 200 participants, Stilton was the wild card, especially for women. Around 85% of women experienced rather bizarre dreams after eating Britain's iconic blue, including talking soft toys, dinner party guests being traded for camels and a vegetarian crocodile upset because it could not eat children. Cheddar, Britain's most popular cheese (ironically), enhanced dreams about celebrities. One girl said she dreamt of helping to form a human pyramid under the supervision of film star Johnny Depp. Of the others, Red Leicester is likely to have you dwelling on the past, and Lancashire will get you focused on the future.

Melatonin

Contrary to popular belief, melatonin does not induce sleep. Melatonin is a sleep hormone that occurs naturally in our brain chemistry, and it helps to regulate our circadian rhythm (sleep cycle) by signaling the body to start shutting down when it's dark outside and to wake up when it's light again. Serious sleep problems are typically not caused by melatonin deficiencies, but eating foods rich in the hormone before bed on a regular basis can help to get the cycle back on track.

Melatonin also helps to regulate serotonin levels, so it helps to make sure that everything in your brain chemistry is working as it should to bring about a great dreaming experience. If you're looking to up your levels, cherries and oats are a great source of melatonin. Check out a vintage Martha Stewart number from 2012 for her [Oat Scones with Sour Dried Cherries](#).



the perfect
trio: vitamin B,
tryptophan and
serotonin

If you're looking for a comforting way to sleep peacefully a peanut butter and jam sandwich might be just what you need. Recommended by Dr. Gary Wenk (author of *Your Brain on Food*), he found sleep is a very active process where your brain needs a lot of sugar to carry out these activities.

As a result he highly recommends a peanut butter and jam sandwich before bed. The bread and jam are great sources of simple carbohydrates which are great for sleep, whilst the protein from the nuts and bread help to make for a perfect serotonin-boosting cocktail.

Serotonin is produced from the amino acid tryptophan and is said to act as a mood enhancer and sleep pattern stabilizer. Nuts and seeds are high in tryptophan and the carbs promote the release of insulin. The insulin promotes absorption of amino acids, and hence your body is able to better absorb the serotonin. Vitamin B, found in whole grains, will also help tryptophan convert to serotonin, and further metabolized into melatonin.

There is still debate over whether serotonin from food actually makes a significant difference in sleep quality; but as long as you're not sensitive to the ingredients, a PB&J sandwich is still worth a try. Easy to digest, it won't keep you awake and will hopefully just promote sweet dreams.



avoid

It may seem really obvious, but it helps to act as a reminder. Eating or drinking anything disruptive to your sleep cycle, like as caffeinated drinks and difficult-to-digest foods, is likely to have an adverse effect on dream content, says psychiatrist James MacFarlane, director of education at the Toronto sleep clinic MedSleep.

An Australian study published in the “International Journal of Psychophysiology” also appears to support this. Volunteers who ate Tabasco-laced foods and mustard before bedtime took longer to fall asleep and experienced poorer sleep quality than normal. Two likely reasons include indigestion and the elevated body temperatures linked to sleep disturbance.

It's also worth remembering not to eat too much, and late in the evening. While you shouldn't go to bed starving (that presents its own body-busting problems, like depleting your lean muscle storage), you also shouldn't hit the sack completely stuffed. When you eat a large meal before bed, your body is working to digest it long into the night – and if your body is still worked up, so are you. The later you fall asleep, the less quality dream time you'll get.



WHEN YOU WAKE

take a moment

A key component of using one's dreams creatively is to avoid leaping out of bed the moment you wake up. Doing so means you'll lose half your dream content as the day's distractions drag you into wakefulness. "If you don't recall a dream immediately, lie still and see if a thought or image comes to mind," Barrett says. "Sometimes a whole dream will come flooding back." This is to make use of the information presented by our unconscious as we slumber.

It's hard to put an exact figure on the ratio of our unconscious to conscious mind, but psychologists estimate it to be nine to one. We may believe that thinking is our best problem-solving strategy, but the power of our conscious mind is relatively small. Obsessively "ruminating" about a problem is strongly linked with stress, depression and anxiety, so letting the unconscious mind work on it may be healthier and more fruitful.

The ~~dreams~~

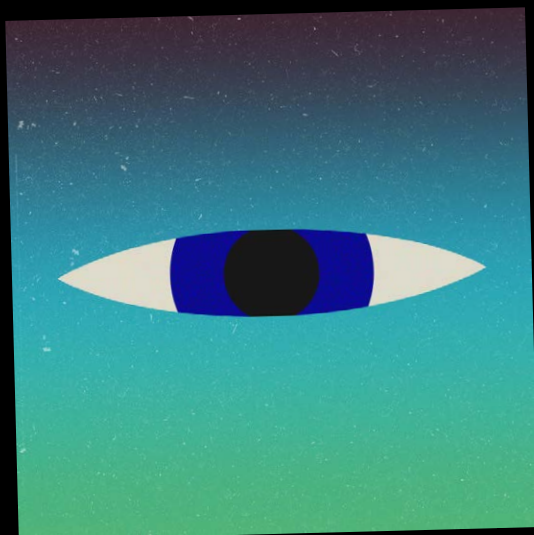
THE MEDITATION



This meditation is inspired by principles from Yoga Nidra and is designed to help you wind down, relax and induce sleep organically. This is thirteen minutes of deep body awareness to bring about harmonious dreamstates. Turn on, tune in and drop out into your subconscious.

To listen please click the eye below, or go to soundcloud.com/aecollective/dream-turbine-meditation/

For a plain text transcription of this meditation please head back to The Dream Turbine event page on The NewBridge Website.



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RECORDING YOUR DREAMS

a suggested guide



I'll try to remember
 my dream tomorrow,
 casual on the
 outside: "It was, I
 was dreaming I was
 here where I am."
 That's been it lately,
 a recurrent dream.

(Bernadette Mayer, *Piece of Cake*)

it's not quite true
 that every car should stop
 while a poem is in operation
 but try to tell me
 it wouldn't be nice
 (Crispin Best, *'your inbox gently fills'*)

In the dream I mutter

Capitalism is not a
 bed of sunflowers

as I hobble around
 Wall Street

in broken heels.

(Jackie Wang, *Sunflower Cast a Spell to Save Us from the Void*)

Why record your dreams?

Sarah Wood argues that 'Dreams are the new patience. Remember them; they remember everything' ('All the Way to Writing'). In remembering your dreams, even the mundane details, you will start to notice patterns, make associations. You will get to know your own unconscious; you will notice that 'Dreaming just begins' (Wood), it is a kind of waiting and beginning all at once. While many projects seem impossible to start, dreams have already started.

Dreams work a bit like poetry. Alice Notley claims that 'Poetry tends to abolish time and present experience as dense and compressed'. We're not suggesting poetry or dreams can literally suspend the temporal flows and demands of ecocidal capitalism, but Crispin Best writes above, 'wouldn't [it] be nice'? By writing your dreams down, you can start to parse those 'compressed' records of entangled emotion, event and relation that occur in dreams. You practice a kind of suspension and refusal. You ask, 'what if this could happen?'



HOW TO RECORD YOUR DREAMS

Please note: this is just a suggested guide; you are free to follow whichever instructions feel appropriate or useful. We recognise not all steps are suitable for everyone, and want to provide an expansive, but by no means exhaustive, stimulus and toolkit for helping you experience, process and share a dream ecology.

Please use this guide after accessing our sound meditation and dream guide.

PHASE I: PREP AND NOTATION

Before going to bed, make a list of things (you don't necessarily have to write it down) you want to dream about. They could be events, relationships, careers, sensory encounters, places or spaces — anything you like.

Cultivate a daily practice of recording your dreams within ten minutes of waking. You can speak into your phone or other recording device, write them down, draw them, text them or share them with someone you live with. Stay in bed for as long as you need to.

Try writing your dreams in first person, if that feels natural. You can use people's names, or you might want to just add their initials or even change the names. Time stamp your dreams. If you want to, give them titles.

PHASE II: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Think about what interrupts your sleep and your dreams. An alarm, daylight or SAD lamp, a bodily need, a sound in your environment, temperature, another person? How might these sensory factors make their way into the dream itself?

Make a note of what substances or lifestyle factors influence your dreams. What you ate or drank before bed, what time you went to bed, what exercise you might have done, where you slept, with whom you slept, when you woke, what your hormones are doing, how much you've been working. Have you been taking any drugs or medications? Do these factors influence the quality or intensity or 'form' of your dreams?

PHASE III: PROCESSING

After a few days, read back your dreams. How many do you tend to have in one night? Do they blur together or are they distinct 'scenes'? What words (nouns, adjectives, verbs especially) tend to come up often? What senses come up often? You might want to make lists or diagrams.

Try rewriting some of the dreams. You could add line breaks or change the perspective — what happens when you write the dreams in second or third person? You could try writing elements of the dream into scenes, like a film. Is it always easy to tell where or when the dream happened; do your dreams always start 'in the middle' of something?

Try writing your dream out as a list or spell. How might your dream 'actualise' something in the real world, and to what ends?

Try giving your dreams tags or genres, like a film or Instagram post. Do they elude these forms of definition? Play around with altering details of the dream. What would you change and why?

Try interpreting your dreams. Think about what you learned about yourself or your environment in the act of recording them. Do your dreams contain messages or feeling? Were they oriented towards memory or something yet to happen? Read them with 'ecology' in mind. How does your dream relate to consumerism, energy, nature, the weather, the more-than-human, time itself? What do you NOT dream about? Why might that be?



Vault

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dream submissions

an overview

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SUBMITTING TO THE DREAM VAULT

By heading to [The Dream Turbine event page](#) on The NewBridge Project website you will find at the bottom a submission form to upload your dream(s). It's as simple as that.

Terms of membership and submission to The Dream Vault can be found [here](#).

FINAL THOUGHTS

What did you use to take you into the dream world? What worked/what didn't work? We'd absolutely love to hear about your dream tools, and if you'd like to contribute to our [resources list](#) please get in touch using the details below.

Otherwise, we'd like to thank you for taking the time to read this resource, and we really hope you found something valuable within The Dream Turbine.

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