

ANAS ALBRAEHE

the dream catcher

THE FALL OF SLEEP

So long as the realm of necessity remains a social dream, dreaming will remain a social necessity. The spectacle is the bad dream of modern society in chains, expressing nothing more than its wish for sleep. The spectacle is the guardian of that sleep. – Guy Debord, "Society of the Spectacle", aphorism #21.

A large-scale and untitled painting by Anas Albraehe shows a young man nestled beneath a heavy red quilt. He rests – open-mouthed, his arm circled overhead – on sky-colored sheets adorned with flowers floating in mid-air. He is in a state of profound stupor. His mind has traveled to a world beyond, and though his dreams are inaccessible to the painter/viewer (voyeur), he is cocooned in a somnolent wistfulness. At the foot of the bed, five pairs of shoes – thongs, sneakers, work boots – lay scattered. As signifiers of his laboring days, as well as the labor of others with whom he lives in close proximity, the shoes belong to the sleeper's waking life – to the daily activity that progressively impinges on the ineradicable stagnancy of sleep.

Albraehe observes, and in the medium of painting, represents the men who share his apartment, according to shift, when sleep has fallen upon them. He includes traces of their waking life within the frame. His subjects are laborers, men displaced by war, and who find no other refuge but under the temporary spell of sleep. Albraehe's painting is warm, bright and intimate. It seeks to capture these men's vulnerability; their humanity. Yet the traces that infiltrate from the edges of the frame are reminders of the increasing inseparability between sleep and wakefulness – in other words: the neglected politics of sleep.

To demonstrate by way of empirical fact: the average night of sleep has shrunk by four hours since the early twentieth century, and two of those hours have curtailed from only a single generation ago¹. Sleep has increasingly become a disturbance to aspirations of interminable productivity. The demand and expectation for never-ending production has in turn resulted in sleep disturbances. Whereas there was a scientific drive in the mid-twentieth century to stimulate wakefulness, recent examples of war-related technological innovations tend toward reducing the body's need for sleep².

Jonathan Crary has argued that history shows us that such extreme innovations intended for war only precede their assimilation into a broader social sphere such that, "the sleepless soldier would be the forerunner of the sleepless worker or consumer."³ Megacities have already had 24/7 markets for some time, but these have accelerated to such a degree in recent decades so as to concur more completely with a laboring/consuming human subject⁴.

In spite of such attempts, with Albraehe's painting, one catches a glimpse of the unrealizable project that is the elimination of sleep. Its conditions may vary – the size of the bed and who it is shared with, the number of hours of sleep, the thread count of the comforter – however, the instrumentalization of the non-activity of sleep remains impossible. His painting, at once ebullient and somniferous, submits the dreams of intrumentalizing sleep to a cavernous slumber.

Natasha Gasparian
Beirut, 2018

¹ Crary, Jonathan. *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*. London and Brooklyn: Verso, 2013. p.22.

² *Ibid.* p.9.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* p.11.



Oil on canvas | 150x200cm | 2018

هو لحاف للوهلة الأول، ذكريات جدتنا وبيتنا العتيق، هو تراث منطقة صنعته منذ القدم حاجة للدفع.

أيادي اناس بسطاء مثله فكرت في تصميمه وهندسته وطريقة اخراجه عرضت جدتي وجدتك انجازها الفني في العلية وفوق

السرير، يومها لم يصفق لها الا من ذاق دفتئه. اللحاف هو المعنى الظاهري الملموس للغطاء أما الذي أشعره فهو يقبع بالعمق لن تساعداي لغتاي العربية والتشكيلة في التعبير عنه.

الا انني الآن أصوره رغبتا مني في توثيقه لما أثر على شخصيتي كإنسان وجعلني أتوه في هذا السر الذي يجعلني أتذكره كل حين.
وحين يزداد شعوري بأن هناك شيء حقيقي غير الذي أعيشه، شاءت الأقدار أن أعيش في بيروت مع مجموعه شبان، هم أصدقاء السكن، ينامون متعبون من كل شيء، حتى من الحياة نفسها. باتت مراقبتي لهم أمرا اعتياديا يخلق تساؤلات كثيرة في رأسي: أين أنا الآن وأين هم؟ ما هذا التسليم المطلق لجسدهم؟ ماذا يحلمون؟ غارقون بحياة أخرى؟ أو ربما حلم لحياة حقيقة أكثر؟

النوم هو حالة التسليم والتخلي الأول التي نعيشها. يمكن أن نمثل أننا على قيد الحياة لكن من الصعب أن نمثل أننا نائمون. قد تفضحنا ابتسامة أو لحظة خوف. في النوم نحن حقيقيون أكثر من كل شيء.

كلنا متشابھون، النائم في قصره والطفل المشرد النائم في الشارع.

في هذه المجموعة من اللوحات التي بحثت من خلالها عني وعنك وعن السر الذي أشعر به ، ماذا يخبأ هذا الغطاء؟

هل هناك غطاء أوسع يخبأ سر هذا الكون تحته ؟

هل النائم ميت حقا؟ أم انه حالم مرتاح يطوف في الآ مرئي؟ عندما تشاهد عملي حاول أن تجدي فيه .

الغطاء في لوحتي ،الحذاء ،اللون هذا الفاصل ما بين الحياة وفنائها هو نفسه الفاصل ما بين السعي والاستسلام. كلنا سننام ذات يوم للأبد. هل فكرنا كيف سننام اخيرا؟ هذه الروح، هل ستنام أم ستبقى حاملة وحدها؟

في بحثي الأول رسمت منال بعيون مفتوحة لأعرف السر في نظرتها لهذا العالم وبمحاولة مني لفهمه أكثر، أما الان أغمضت عيوني عن كل هذا العالم وسبحت في اللامرئي مثل منال، ربما أتذوق روح المعرفة قبل أن أنام نوماً عميقاً ودائم السعادة.

أنس البرّيجي، ٢٠١٨





Oil on canvas | 100x150cm | 2018



Oil on canvas | 150x200cm | 2018



Oil on canvas | 80x80cm | 2018



Oil on canvas | 80x80cm | 2018



Oil on canvas | 130x150cm | 2018



Oil on canvas | 360x200cm | 2018 (Pages 16&17)

Oil on canvas | 120x150cm | 2018





Oil on canvas | 120x180cm | 2018



Oil on canvas | 120x180cm | 2018



Oil on canvas | 120x180cm | 2018



Oil on canvas | 120x180cm | 2018



Oil on paper | 70x100cm | 2018



Oil on paper | 70x100cm | 2018



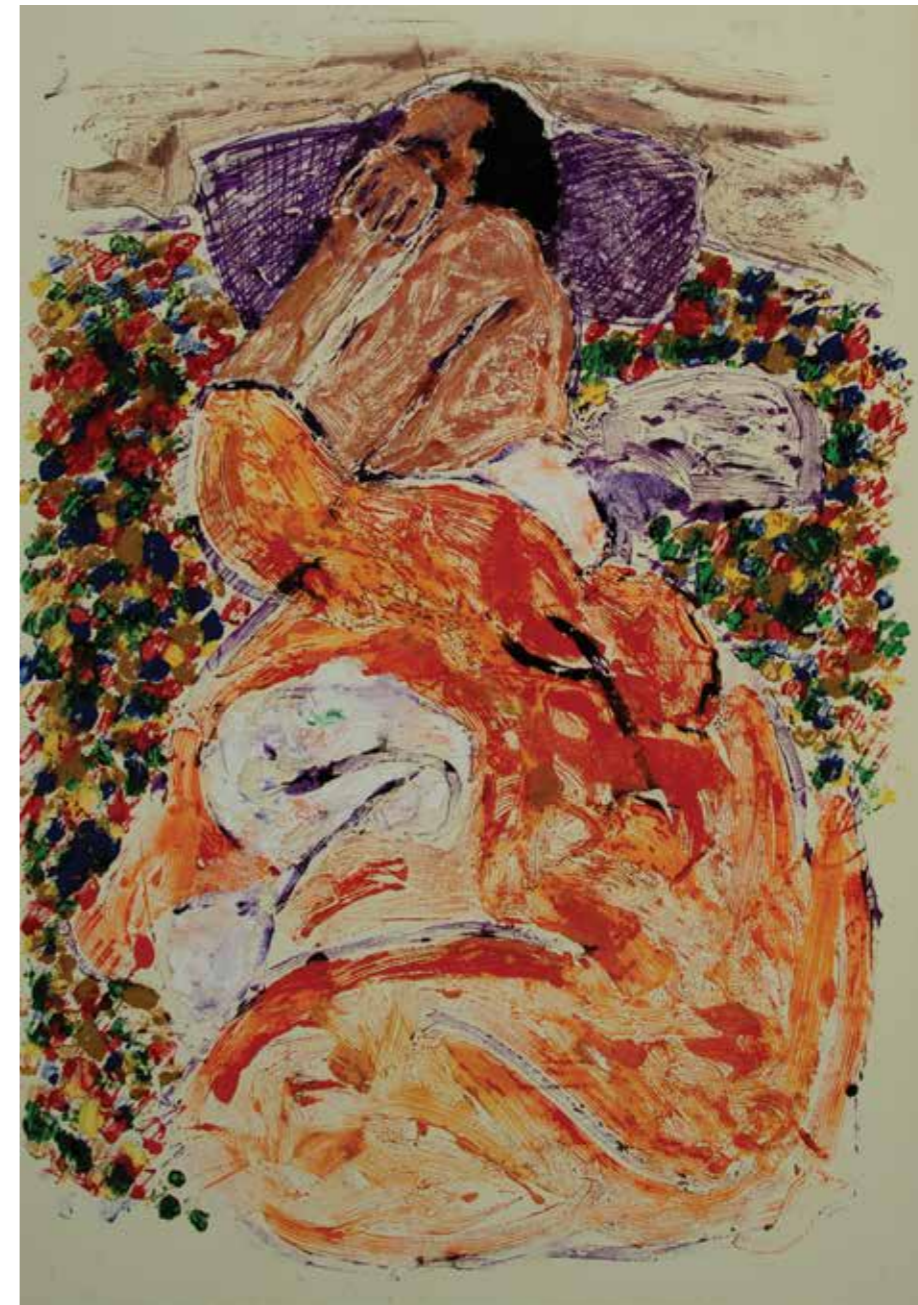
Oil on paper | 70x100cm | 2018



Oil on paper | 70x100cm | 2018



Oil on paper | 100x70cm | 2018



Oil on paper | 100x70cm | 2018



Oil on paper | 21x30cm - each | 2018

Oil on paper | 29.7x42cm- each | 2018

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Born in Syria in 1991, Anas Albraehe is a multidisciplinary artist with a focus on painting and theatre performance. He received a bachelor's degree in painting and drawing from the Fine Arts University of Damascus, Syria in 2014. After the onset of war in Syria, he relocated to Lebanon where he obtained an MA in Psychology and Art Therapy from the Lebanese University in 2015. His recent work combines his interests in the fields of art and psychology to produce portraiture that explores the psychology of color and the gaze of the Other. Albraehe's solo exhibition, titled *Manal*, was held respectively in Artspace Hamra in Lebanon and in Wadi Finan in Jordan, both in 2017. He has also participated in two group exhibitions, at Albareh Galerie in Bahrain in 2015, and at Artspace Hamra in 2016. Albraehe participated in SAFIR TA'AROF 2017, an artist workshop as part of the Sharjah Art Biennial, 2016-2017.

© Agial Art Gallery - All rights reserved
Design by Carol Chehab
Photography by Oubaida Najem
Printed by Salim Dabbous Printing Co. sarl
13 September, 2018
Beirut | Lebanon
www.agialart.com | info@agialart.com

 @agialgallery
 Agial Art Gallery
 @AgialArt
 Agial Art Gallery