

CASULA
POWERHOUSE
ARTS CENTRE

A FAMILIAR PLACE I'VE NEVER SEEN

JOMAKHAN JAFARI AND DANNY KENNEDY



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With thanks to all those who shared their dreams with us.

Exhibition at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

Opened 21 March 2020



Jomakhan Jafari and Danny Kennedy met during 'English Conversation' classes at Auburn library. They applied for time in the studio at the Peacock Gallery and Auburn Arts Studio in 2012 and developed this exhibition. They interviewed Western Sydney residents about their dreams and collaborated to produce a series of works both individually and some of the works together. Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre is pleased to present this remarkable insight into the dreams and lives of our diverse community. Congratulations to the artists.

Danny Kennedy and Jomakhan Jafar (*image courtesy of the artists*)

ARTISTS STATEMENT

Every night the dreamers of Western Sydney travel to thousands of different places. Many go around the world, to unseen places, or simply down a local street. People re-live events from their past, have extraordinary experiences, or just go about their daily lives, worries and hopes. It is this combination of geography and memory, the fantastical and the mundane, the local and the global that allows dreams to sketch a complex portrait of a city and its individuals.

We interviewed local residents about their dreams, and then interpreted these using Persian calligraphy and photography. In some cases photographs have been overlayed with calligraphy. This layering of text onto images suggests the individual and collective layers of meaning we attach to the places, objects and people around us. It is this mesh of associations which makes up the psychogeography of a place, and is the substance of dreams.

The everyday exterior of a city belies the dreamscape which lies within it. Danny Kennedy's photographs are images of the suburban landscape of Western Sydney, which contrast with the often dramatic dreams they refer to. Only staged or strange details within the images hint at the interior life of the city they refer to.

Jomakhan Jafari's calligraphic works are created with a dark and tactile resist technique using tar and petrol. The swirling, overlayed and repeated letters which are the hallmark of the "siyah mashq" calligraphy style are inherently suited to describing dreams. There is hidden logic within the apparent chaos, symbols re-occur, forms appear and melt back into the blackness of the tar. The shapes of everyday objects have also been registered in the tar by a kind of frottage technique. Like objects taken up by the subconscious, they take on an ominous significance. The calligraphy is predominantly composed of words from the dreams themselves, while in some cases it graphically suggests objects and movements within the dreams.

Western Sydney is the most multi-cultural area of Sydney with large percentages of its residents were born overseas (over 40% in Liverpool). In dreams different places, times, cultures and ideas alternate and converge, suggesting that beyond the physical dichotomy of "here" and "there", "then" and "now", there is a space within our minds where past and present, different locations and experiences sit side by side, merge, converse, argue and form new ideas. This is the reality of the participants and which this exhibition attempts to capture.

- Jomakhan Jafari and Danny Kennedy

هر شب ساکنان رویا بین محله اوبرن در سیدنی به هزاران مکان جدید سفر می کنند. بسیاری از آنها به گوش و کنار جهان سفر می کنند و بعضی به مکانهایی که تا کنون ندیده اند و تعدادی از آنها نیز به سادگی در محله زندگی خود به گشت و گذار می پردازند. بسیاری از مردم اتفاقات گذشته زندگی خود را دوباره زندگی می کنند، وقایعی شگفت انگیز را تجربه می کنند و یا تها رزندگی روزمره خود را در رویا می بینند، سرشار از بیم ها و آرزوها. رویاهایی که ترکیبی هستند از جغرافیا و خاطرات، موضوعاتی کاملاً خیالی و یا مادی و زمینی، محدود به حوزه جغرافیایی زندگی مردمان و یا موضوعاتی جهانی که این امکان را پدید می آورند که رویاهای تصویری پیچیده از یک شهر و اشخاص ساکن در آن را ترسیم نمایند.

جمعه خان جعفری و دنیال کندي با گروهی از ساکنان محلی در رابطه با رویاهاییان مصاحبه هایی را انجام داده اند و این رویاهای را با کمک هنر خوش نویسی پارسی و عکاسی تفسیر کرده و به تصویر کشیده اند. در بعضی موارد هنر خوش نویسی بر روی عکس صورت پذیرفته است که لایه های نوشتار بر تصویر نشان از لایه های معنا شناختی فردی و یا کهن الگوهای جمعی دارند که ما به مکانها، اشیا و مردمان پیرامون خود مرتبط می سازیم. این شبکه ای است از همبستگی های جغرافیایی روان شناختی یک محدوده جغرافیایی که می توان آن را جوهر رویاهایی دانست که ما می بینیم.

صورت خارجی و روزمره یک شهر حس غریب رویاهای نهفته در آن شهر را در خود پنهان دارد. عکس های دنیل کندي عموماً تصویری بی واسطه از چشم اندازهای محله اوبرن ارائه می دهد، چیزی که عمدتاً در تناقض با رویاهای مهیجی قرار می گیرند که با این چشم اندازها مرتبط اند.

پیچهای قلم و لایه های حروف که در سیاه مشق های جمعه خان جعفری تکرار می شوند توانی ذاتی در توصیف و شرح رویا هایی دارند که به تصویر کشیده شده اند. منطقی پنهان در آشفتگی ظاهری حروف و نشانگانی که تکرار می شوند، صورت بندی هایی که ظاهر شده و دوباره سیاهی چوهر ذوب شده و محو می شوند. هنر سیاه مشق در ترسیم رویا باز اندیشه اشیا و حرکات در رویاهای فرمی گرافیکی است که چون برداشتهای ذهن نیمه هوشیار ماهیتی تیره، معنا دار و پر اهمیت دارند

وبرن محله ای چند فرهنگی است و بیش از نیمی از جمعیت آن خارج از استرالیا متولد شده اند. در رویاهای ترسیم شده در این آثار هنری مکانهای مختلف و تناوبهای زمانی و هم زمانی ها بر این اندیشه دلالت دارند که جدا از دوگانگی فیزیکی "اینجا" و "آنجا" و "اکنون" و "آینده" جایی در ذهن وجود دارد که گذشته و آینده و مکانها و تجربیات گوناگون با یکدیگر برخورد کرده، آمیخته و یگانه شده اند و شکلی جدید از پندر را پدید آورده اند و این واقعیتی است که این نمایشگاه تلاش دارد به آن تجسم ببخشد.

Translation: Aydin Pourmoslemi

OPPORTUNITY

I dreamt one night I was an educated man.

I was very, very happy because in real life I am not very educated. So when I woke up during the night, I was very upset. I felt like I had lost everything. I couldn't go back to sleep. I've never really been to school, it was impossible in my real life.

It's also my dream for the future, to get some education. I feel as though I have been blind and mute my whole life. Now I'm in Australia, I have a golden opportunity to get some education, so I'm trying to make my dream come true.



Jomakhan Jafari

Opportunity

2012, tar and petrol on paper

ACCUSATION

One of my dreams was about a very close friend of mine from Pakistan.

In real life he left Pakistan, just like other people who come to Australia, and now after six months he's finally reached the detention centre on Christmas Island. In the dream I was back in Pakistan, and I saw him. He was a little bit sad.

I said "But I heard you came to Australia? I expected to visit you in Sydney." He said "No, unfortunately... Do you know what happened? When I was in the detention centre, they wanted to hold a ceremony. Some Aboriginal people brought their traditional clothes. Some of them were stitched with gold. I don't know what happened... They said that some clothes had been lost. And they accused me of stealing them. And no matter how much I said "No, I didn't do this, please believe me", they didn't believe me. And they deported me."

And when I looked at his face, because I know him as a very honest man, I felt very sorry for him. "But that's life." I said. "These kind of things happen to everyone, you must be patient."



Jomakhan Jafari

Accusation
2012, tar and petrol on paper

EFFORT

I was flying on an umbrella. I started from my house, in Auburn. It's an umbrella that we own, but it's broken now. It's red. The top of it looks a bit like a bottle. I was really trying to control it, because it was going crazy. I had to move my whole body. It was nearly falling. You know like when you go on rides, a feeling like that? I landed with a thud, back at my house again.



Jomakhan Jafari and Danny Kennedy
Effort
2012, Indian ink on pigment print

FEELING

I used to have this dream for a week at a time, every night.

Me, my sister and my mum would go on an escalator in the shops. I was always behind them. Then my chin would get stuck to the escalator. It would get sucked into the gap between the stairs, a few stairs above where I was standing. And it would hurt. I could see the light – you know how there's lights in between the stairs? It was a buzzing feeling, like a light going through my body. My sister and my mum would say "Oh, that's just a normal thing for you. You're the only one that this happens to."

Then we would get upstairs, and we'd always go to the same bathroom. It was always full of steam, and big women, big Persian women washing themselves. As soon as I went in there, I couldn't breathe. But I'd have to wait for my mum and sister to come out. So I'd... try to make them pee faster. It wasn't funny, it was pretty scary. I was 7 or 8. I was in Iran back then, but it was an Australian shopping centre. But it would have a Persian bathroom. A public bath.



Danny Kennedy
Feeling
2012, pigment print

DISBELIEF

For 15 years, I didn't dream about anything in Australia.

I was always going back to Somalia, going back home. The dream I remember the most is going back to our home and looking for a TV and a VCR recorder. I couldn't get over them. I think we bought them the year the war happened. 1989. I was eleven when I left there.

It's like I was actually there, going back into the room, and I remembered things that I didn't even remember in waking life. I remember wanting to take that VCR. I even remember the brand, it was a Samsung. I think that was the first time we owned a TV and a VCR, and they were both very small. It's because of that dream that I know now what the room looked like.

I guess because when we left there, we didn't think we were leaving for good. We left there thinking "This is just a bit of fighting, so just take the little things, we'll be back." Then we kept saying that in every suburb we went to.



Danny Kennedy
Disbelief
2012, pigment print

MAYBE

I dreamt I was in a golden city.

There was a cobbled street that was very wide and long, and I was with a very close friend of mine. I felt that I was in was Jerusalem, because I had lived in a Kibbutz in Israel for three months, thirty years ago.

In my dream I envisaged the city as being gold, it was simply bathed in gold. The Dome of the Rock was golden, everything was golden, with a shimmering light emanating from the gold. The streets were deserted. I felt very small, in the midst of that dream. As if I were a small speck in the universe.

In reality, I wanted to go back to that city. It was a special place for me, and when I finally went back, last year actually, the entire atmosphere had changed. There was a sense of tension and sadness. I think that the memory of what is precious to you – and that time in my life was very precious to me – it's important to encapsulate that in your sleep, in your subconscious, as a precious memory. In a sense of "What could be".



Jomakhan Jafari

Maybe

2012, tar and petrol on paper

CONFIDENCE

I was quite young, maybe fifteen, sixteen. I'd be in a group of people, like a sit-down around a space, and everybody's talking. There are tables with coffees and sweets on them.

And this is my vivid memory – I get up, I don't talk to anybody, and I literally stand in the centre of the space. Like taking centre stage. I want to be seen. I only see only my body, I never see my head. And I never see below my knees. And I'm literally forcing my skin off my body. I don't cut it. It's my flesh, that's all you can see. You can't see the details of a curve or... anything. I'm just there, taking off my skin. In front of all these people. Who are oblivious to me being there, mind you.

I don't know, I always felt like I wanted to expose who I really was to people. Or I hated who I was, so I just wanted to take off this skin, you know? So I'm wanting to get attention, and everybody's just there having tea.



Jomakhan Jafari and Danny Kennedy
Confidence
2012, Indian ink on pigment print

INDIFFERENCE

I had a dream about a local man who I've seen around. I don't know who he is, but I've seen him around. He was hunting me down.

I was in and out of worlds... you know, different countries? It was like *The Bourne Identity*. How he keeps going from country to country, and he keeps being hunted. I was in different parts of Auburn, but in different worlds.

So for example I know I'm in Turkey in my dream, but I'm in this local shop in Auburn. Does that make sense? Or some African country, like – do you know where Duck River is? And do you know there's a small park, and right behind that small park there's a small bunch of trees and you can't actually see the river until you get close? Near Mona street. So it's that section, and I think it's Africa. And there's Lebanon, but I don't know where. It's the same person chasing me. And my staff are all supporting him. So I go to them for help, and I get locked in a cupboard. Then they tell him "She's in here".

I don't know, I think maybe I'm at a point in my life where everybody around me – family, friends, workmates – wants something from me, but they don't always care how I am.



Jomakhan Jafari and Danny Kennedy

Indifference

2012, Indian ink on pigment print

GOLSHAHR

When I was in the detention centre, I dreamt suddenly I was in Golshahr.

Golshahr means flower-city, it's a place in Tehran. I was there in the centre of the town, but I was really worried, because I thought "How did I get here?" I didn't have any passport, or documents, or any kind of warranty to come back to Australia. I got to Australia through a lot of hardship and difficulty. Especially between Indonesia and Australia. I should have been happy, because I was in Golshahr to visit my family. But I wasn't. There's a big roundabout in the middle of Golshahr, and I just remember standing in the middle of the roundabout and thinking about how I got there, and how I could get back.

At that time, some people from the camp had been deported back to Afghanistan. So it's natural for people to worry like that, every night, every day. I woke up and my body was wet with sweat. But I was very happy. Because I saw I was in my bed, on the top of the bunk in the camp.



Jomakhan Jafari and Danny Kennedy
Golshahr
2012, Indian ink on pigment print

PAST

I am on a bicycle trip into the past, riding on a cobblestone road.

It is like a highway with a continuous wall with shut windows and doors. I am wearing a long, white, knitted dress. I pass the nuns from the Catholic school where I studied. I arrive at a very high door made of straw, a place that I recognize as my house where I was born. I enter through a long hallway. In one room there is a gorgeous woman sitting on a chair, half mulatto, with long sleek hair of an intense black colour getting ready for a party. She has a white brooch on her black dress. She has beautiful, long, red nails, immaculately painted, and next to her is a man who keeps on painting her nails over and over. This woman was my nanny, but she seems so young now, almost my own age. How could she be? She was an old woman as I remembered.

I was born in Melipilla, a rural town in Chile. From this town you can see the Andes, and in the dream I could see the mountain tops which were covered in snow. Going back there in the dream was like experiencing a happy memory. I knew where I was, although it was a completely different place.

I was living here in Newington when I had the dream, we had just moved



Jomakhan Jafari

Past

2012, tar and petrol on paper

into this new neighbourhood. I may have been feeling lost and was trying to find some footing for this new era in my life. My nanny was the one that was there for me all the time, mum used to work a lot. I rode as a young girl, and now I am about to start again.

BEGINNING

When I was in the detention centre in Curtin, I had a very interesting dream. I saw an animal which had died. The dead animal was the same shape as the map of Afghanistan. I saw a lot of other animals eating it. Buzzards. A very bad smell was coming off it, so I took one of the raincoats they gave us in the centre, and put it over the animal.



Danny Kennedy
Beginning
2012, pigment print

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