

In Your Dreams

Curated by Edwina Bartlem and Victor Griss

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Kate Shaw, Sally Smart, Van Sowerwine & Isobel
Knowles, Yandell Walton, Sharon West**

Exhibition dates

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Counihan Gallery

233 Sydney Rd, Brunswick

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In your dreams, blurred and distinct

Carrying with her the protective warmth of a day spent given over to work, she lies on the bed and waits for sleep with open eyes. She waits for the familiar smudges of furniture to emerge from the darkness of the room. At her side, a small cat burrows, trying to make a well between her waist, the crook of her elbow, and the mattress beneath. Clockwise, clockwise, round and round, the little frame of the Siamese cat, now more bone than flesh, slowly, awkwardly, rhythmically rotates in his search for sleep, but he cannot settle. At night, the long black cat that follows him by day cannot be seen, but is still felt: his long shadow, his time soon up. This nightly courtship, a dance performed as comfort sought, as constant as the stars.

The twisted bedclothes tell of the fitfulness of limbs extended and tucked in close only to be extended and tucked in once more, of pillows plumped and folded in half and stuffed under head. Left, supine, right, prone, comfort pursued and sometimes found, sometimes not. And now in crumple of linen and acceptance, she lies still listening to the sound of the cat's purr and waits to feel his body go soft and yield to sleep. A little black nose near her own, minutes pass in stillness, sleep will come.

In the semi darkness, the kaleidoscopic patterns of the day augment themselves overhead. The chatter, the noise, the missed opportunities, the words meant, felt, but not spoken, the tasks left undone, swim overhead until the quiet cloak of sleep falls and takes them away, all consciousness lost. The expectancy of sleep, of entering the dream state, mirrors the soft welcoming hum of conversations heard in those intoxicating moments before the curtain rises at the theatre. The

atmosphere has an air of expectancy as the audience awaits the tease in the wings that will surely come. From the orchestra pit, brass and woodwind flex their muscle. This delicious state of expectation is no different to the liminal place between falling asleep and dream state; to her it bears the hallmark of theatre. Tick, tock. Tick, tock. In the distance, Prokofiev's beautifully eerie time-keeping score, and the twelve chimes of midnight.

Falling asleep is as hard to chart as its fuzzy and changeable borders. The map is in constant flux, night after night. But the Dream Realm rewards its explorers and when the curtain rises, revealing signposts from the day tied to something altogether more obscure and not yet fathomable, she can take to the stage and soar, weightless. It will be some time before she must wake to house lights, conscious of her heavy limbs. For now, in dream, as in audience, she can feel what it is like to step inside the melodic sweeping circles of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* with the swan maidens by frozen lakeside ready to take flight, and perform Odile's thirty-two fouettés; and over in the wings, spy Joseph Cornell hunched over, scissors in hand, making yet another boxed-world gift for Tamara Toumanova. Odette's mad beating of her wings at the windowpane, a harbinger of death, the ultimate lost soul.

Or perhaps this time she will take the role of one of Balanchine's four different temperaments —melancholic, sanguinic, phlegmatic, choleric— and feel how movement is weighted to the floor even in elevation, as though some giant magnet below the stage was being held in place. Perhaps Balanchine himself will wield the giant magnet, which enables that off-centre tilt, the pelvis thrust

forward and the feet flexed. The placement of each part of the body is rendered both perfect and odd. The leap from her usual place in the hubbub of the stalls to the stage, an easy feat behind closed eyelids, and the pursuit of the spotlight's glare is momentarily courted.

Dusk films over mirror, the scene changes, the boom gates of Gustav Mahler's seventh symphony sound. *Crack!* Nightscape navigation proves temperamental. From Odette's frozen dream state, unfastened from Balanchine's collage of moving parts, she now finds herself on Eldey Island where the last pair of nesting Great Auks are having their portraits drawn for posterity – no, correction, that's not as it first appears, it never, never is – where the last pair are strangled in the year 1844*. Moments are suspended as the scene unfolds, as if on stage. The hunters move in altered time; sailing aloft in slow motion over the shellfish banks and scrambling over the rocky face of an island shaped like a 'sack of flour'. In the background, Ketill Ketilsson's giant boot accidentally cracks the last egg of the species on a block of lava during the tragic dance-cum-skirmish off the coast of Iceland. The "non-flying flatfoot", *Plautus impennis*, and its spinning top egg, now relegated to fairytale. Nesting in sagas, parables, paintings, and roosting in song by day, buried in dream by night, the bird appears to her as symbol awaiting reading. It reminds her that she is never far removed from nature: a peacock's feather in the house, unlucky you'll be; an eagle, synonymous with triumph, Agamemnon's omen of victory; curses, like chickens, they come home to roost; two in hand are better than one; and a robin and a wren misfortune bound. This is wearing to the bone, this witness ride, adding turrets to our 'castles in the sky' as we read Nature's hieroglyphics.

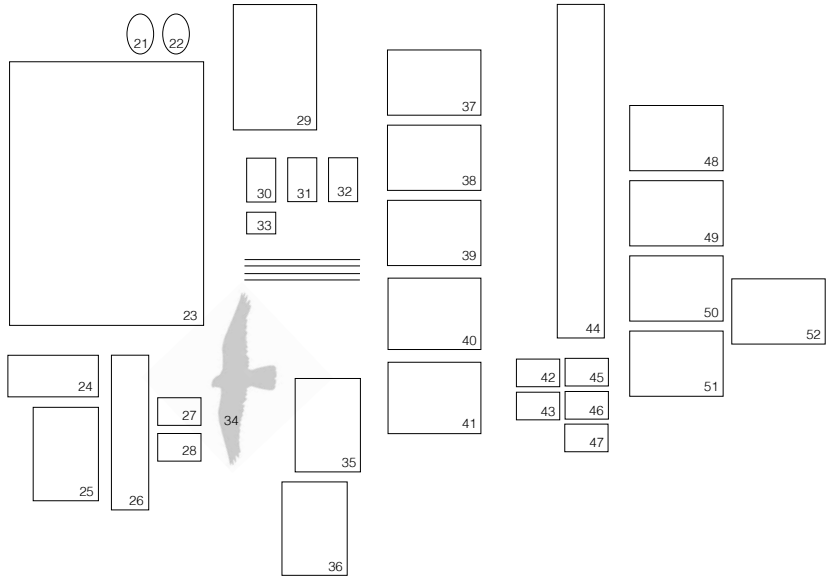
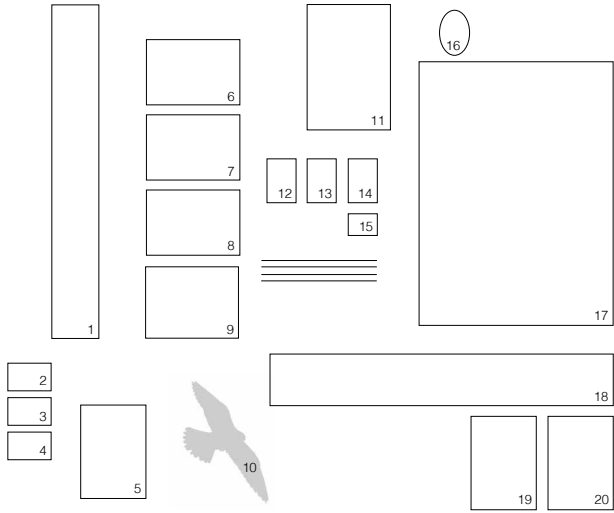
Crack! Black night takes us back to theatre's sanctum. Quickly racing, this nighttime navigation affords her the chance to create one endless performance of her sole devising. In the muffled distance Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* flows into

Vivaldi's *Concerto for Two Mandolins*, and she finds herself enveloped by a black curtain that folds its giant fabric arms about her before letting her loose in Jiří Kylián's *Bella Figura*. Whirling in the glowing dark, the bodies of the dancers seem to ripple and convulse, as if for one moment their bodies contain not organs, but a surge of water, a spill of jelly. There is the loud crack of a thigh being slapped, to echo the Eldey Island scramble. It is followed by the distinct and familiar sound of feet as they land, and bodies as they fall to the stage floor, part artifice, part universal truth, part *tabula rasa* upon which the mind may project its own meanings. Tick, tock. Tick, tock. A leg swings for the briefest moment like a pendulum oscillating back and forth from a central point, signalling time here is soon up; cover the furniture with sheets, close another wing, grow smaller. Unyoke, unhook; time soon to say goodbye. In every little thing, a reference to mortality crashes in and proves hard to shake.

Somewhere in the distance, a cat purrs. And in accord, they turn over.

Gracia Haby
2014

A handful of words dedicated to our elderly Siamese cat Omar.



1
Tumbling lightly, tumbling fast (I), 2014
Gracia Haby
Artists' book, unique state, featuring collage elements and pencil
21cm (w) x 16cm (h) x 1cm (d) (closed) 8 page concertina

2
The obvious stumbling block in the white light of day, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)

3
With an inkling, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)

4
This was a distressing conclusion, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)

5
Beautifully staged (Shukumei c 1975–76), 2014
Gracia Haby
Collage on ephemera
33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

6
The Bluebird pas de deux re-imagined, 2014
Gracia Haby
Collage on ephemera
33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

7
In the strange and enchanted half-hour before the rising of the curtain, 2014
Gracia Haby
Collage on ephemera
33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

8
ONEtwothree ONETwothree ONETwothree, 2014
Gracia Haby
Collage on ephemera
33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

9
No, you couldn't really grumble, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)

10
Hooded plover (Thinornis rubricollis), 2013
Louise Jennison
Pencil on paper
28cm (w) x 47cm (h)

11
And Zarafa Kept Walking, 2013
Gracia Haby & Louise Jennison
Four-colour lithographic offset print on Fabriano Artistico 300gsm
traditional white hot-press paper
23cm (w) x 33cm (h)

12

*In the borrowed headdress of a seahorse
from Sadko (c 1916)*, 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

11cm (w) x 16.5cm (h)

13

In the borrowed costume of Petrouchka (c 1911), 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

11cm (w) x 16.5cm (h)

14

*In the borrowed costume of a Polovtsian warrior
(Prince Igor c 1909–37)*, 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

11cm (w) x 16.5cm (h)

15

In a borrowed costume for a squid from Sadko (c 1916), 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

10.5cm (w) x 6.5cm (h)

16

Sooty Albatross Egg, 2014

Louise Jennison

Pencil on paper

7cm (w) x 12cm (h)

17

Quietly watching (before Eldey Island), 2014

Louise Jennison

Pencil on paper

56cm (w) x 76cm (h)

18

As if from the clouds, restless, 2014

Gracia Haby

Artists' book, unique state, featuring collage elements and pencil

31cm (w) x 15.5cm (h) (closed) 5 page concertina

19

Ondine silhouette (Margot Fonteyn), 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

20

Leaving it to others, 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

21

Hooded plover Egg, 2014

Louise Jennison

Pencil on paper

6cm (w) x 10cm (h)

22

Hooded plover Egg, 2014

Louise Jennison

Pencil on paper

6cm (w) x 10cm (h)

23
Suspended until the end (Great Auk (Pinguinus impennis)), 2014
Louise Jennison
Pencil on paper
56cm (w) x 76cm (h)

24
Whipped Cream
Ephemera

25
Les Rendezvous reversed (Alicia Markova and Stanislas Idzikowsky), 2014
Gracia Haby
Collage on ephemera
33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

26
The Loon of Swan Hill seeks an audience, 2014
Gracia Haby
Artists' book, unique state, featuring collage elements and pencil
15cm (w) x 9cm (h) (closed) 6 page concertina

27
Like beads sliding off a suddenly broken thread, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)

28
And all the world was in a green conspiracy of quietude, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)

29
Turning the Tables on Alfred Court, 2013
Gracia Haby & Louise Jennison
Four-colour lithographic offset print on Fabriano Artistico 300gsm
traditional white hot-press paper
23cm (w) x 33cm (h)

30
That was the very last pair (I), 2014
Louise Jennison
Pencil on paper
11cm (w) x 16.5cm (h)

31
One smooth fated egg (3rd July 1844), 2014
Louise Jennison
Pencil on paper
11cm (w) x 16.5cm (h)

32
That was the very last pair (II), 2014
Louise Jennison
Pencil on paper
11cm (w) x 16.5cm (h)

33
Off the coast of Iceland, 2014
Louise Jennison
Pencil on paper
10.5cm (w) x 6.5cm (h)

34
Sooty Albatross (Phoebastria fusca), 2014
Louise Jennison
Pencil on paper
44cm (w) x 62cm (h)

- 35
Back up, fall down, 2014
Gracia Haby
Collage on ephemera
33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)
- 36
Fall down, thud, 2014
Gracia Haby
Collage on ephemera
33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)
- 37
Magnetic headdress of the Buffoon's Wife (Chout, 1921), 2014
Gracia Haby
Collage on ephemera
33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)
- 38
Ground covered (The Prospect Before Us, 1940), 2014
Gracia Haby
Collage on ephemera
33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)
- 39
A groove on a gramophone record, 2014
Gracia Haby
Collage on ephemera
33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)
- 40
They then reassembled and started all over again, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)

- 41
Wet whiskers drying, 2013
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)
- 42
The staccato surmises of the Marmots caused bafflement, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)
- 43
From thrill to thrill, Verreaux's Sifaka, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)
- 44
Tumbling lightly, tumbling fast (II), 2014
Gracia Haby
Artists' book, unique state, featuring collage elements and pencil
21cm x 16cm x 1cm (closed) 8 page concertina
- 45
Constellation weaving in the first light, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)
- 46
Standing mutely by, 2014
Gracia Haby
Postcard collage
14cm (w) x 9cm (h)

47

Make-believe sat vigilant in the small enclosure, 2014

Gracia Haby

Postcard collage

14cm (w) x 9cm (h)

48

Slowly across the clouds, 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

49

Gemini alert (Horoscope, 1937–38), 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

50

*Miss Fairbrother as Aladdin calls time
(The Romantic Period)*, 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

51

Kitri camouflage, 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)

52

Seen, unseen, 2014

Gracia Haby

Collage on ephemera

33.5cm (w) x 23.5cm (h)