

DREAM CORRIDORS NANUKA TCHITCHOUA



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DREAM CORRIDORS

ოცნება დერეფნების ots'neba derep'nebis

In the Presence of Absence – *Introduction by Fidel Smalls*

The Dream Corridors are a philosophical idea belonging to a collective of artists known as the “Last Night Dreamers.” This collective was founded in Los Angeles, California, in 2011 by artist Nanuka Tchitchoua and her team of artistic and inventive collaborators. The Dream Corridors are a fictitious location where the dreams of living beings exist without interruption or disturbance. It is a place where dreams can be accessed, stored, created or left behind. The Dream Corridors begin in the mysterious parts of the body or brain where psychological and neurological forces are at work. The Corridors have no end. The conceived hallway extends from the body of the living being out into open space and the imagination. It is an abstract place with a strong, definitive identity.

Do we know where dreams come from? How come human beings do not possess the ability to design their own dreams, the dreams that occur during slumber, and why is it that human beings often remember a dream upon first waking but then forget it completely? The Dream Corridors attempt an explanation of the lack of control humans have over the visions experienced in their minds when asleep. The Corridors are also a place to keep the concept of hope, longing, and the type of dreaming that occurs in waking hours; the day-dream or the fantasy. When humans decide on their life aspirations, or even the simple experience of their fears, there are self-constructed visions within the amount of time spent planning and subsequently expecting. If the muse of the sleeping dream is an unknown entity, then the human being could be held responsible for its own waking dreams. More often than not, those hopes take on a life of their own. Humans ponder what is “meant to be” or if they can achieve what only they see in their mind’s eye. Much of life is spent trying to convey those visions to others, or to anything outside of the self. The Dream Corridors are the lengths they must travel in order to do so.

The “Last Night Dreamers” work collectively on the idea of using this uncontrolled environment as a conduit for contemplation, to provoke powerfully complete artistic expression and the development of deeper artistic meaning. The “Last Night Dreamers” have collaborated on exhibitions, individuals artworks, writings of poetry, prose, and critical thinking, art workshops and historical interpretation. The collective consists of researchers, artists, educators, curators, and inventors from both the United States of America and the Republic of Georgia. For the display of their work, many efforts in translation have been made and from this, challenges arose. This “dream concept” comes from the difficulty in correctly translating the word “dream” from English to Georgian, and vice versa.

In 2011, the “Dreamers” held a workshop at the Ballona Creek Playawana Facility to decipher these specific language barriers. During the workshop, the theme for this exhibition arose. In translating the words of the collective’s name, “Last Night Dreamers”, the question of a “final dream” came up in discussion. Artist Nanuka Tchitchoua, and National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence, Fidel Smalls, both the “Last Night Dreamers” collective directors and workshop leaders, organized a lively discussion on if there is such a thing as a “final dream”, and in which case, where does the “final dream” exist in its finality? The answer was in the Dream Corridors.

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Nanuka Tchitchoua was born in 1978 in Tbilisi, Georgia. She immigrated to the U.S. with her family in 1992 and continued her art and film education at California Institute of the Arts with BFA in Art and MFA in Experimental Animation. She is an artist working in multi medias, from painting and collage to sculpture and film, all of which draw profoundly on her deeply Georgian soul. It has been her focus and a mission to bring a contemporary perspective on Georgian traditions that have survived cultural transition and upheaval for centuries. Her work is a fusion of ancient archetypes, ethnographic treasures and various cultural icons. In navigating the tenuous path of her dual cultural identity, she asserts the transformative possibilities of finding beauty amid ruins, making something out of nothing – a cross-referencing of images that are fiercely nostalgic for a heroic and romantic dream world.

Since 2002 Tchitchoua has been working as the liaison of the Tula Tea Room at the Museum of Jurassic Technology and the Borzoi Cabinet Theatre. Her work harmonizes with the vision of the museum's filmic aspirations to limn the culture and tradition of Georgia for audiences worldwide. She is an independent curator and initiator of the artists' exchange projects at the Gregg Fleishman Studio: The Guest Room Projects. Tchitchoua returns to Georgia regularly to participate in the lively contemporary art culture there where she is the artist/curator of the American Pavilion of the FestiNova (International Festival of Contemporary Art) in Garikula, Georgia. She shows her work in exhibitions and film festivals, Highlights include *TOMORROWLAND: CalArts in Moving Pictures*, The Museum of Modern Art, NYC, 2006; *Fragments from a Lovers Discourse*, Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater, 2006; *Over Here-There*, the Guggenheim Gallery at Chapman University, Stanford University 2002; and worldwide in Holland, France, China, Spain, Norway, Germany, and Russia.



Art-Villa Garikula , the Regional Center for Contemporary Arts, is a cultural enterprise which undertakes a mission to support creation, presentation and dissemination of contemporary art through diverse programs and projects. Housed in what formerly was the Bolgarky family summer residence, it now represents a multifunctional international platform: the first artists' commune and residency in Georgia, exhibition space and the establishment for unconventional education. (Non Profit Foundation for the Revival and Development of Cultural Heritage of Shida Kartli is the founder of the Art-Villa.)

Art-Villa is a place that brings together artists from all over the world to exchange ideas and implement different projects. It is a cultural crossroads for people with creative interests and various backgrounds in the arts where imaginative energy is accumulated. It creates international opportunities and promotes joint contemporary art projects, mobility of artists and people-to-people links. Based on the principles of Bauhaus and using the experience developed by Modernism, especially the heritage of so called Tbilisi Avant Garde, the main task of the Art-Villa Garikula is to spread the word about social change through contemporary art. The significant instrument for the Art-Villa to undertake this particular mission is the International Festival of Contemporary Art in Honor of the Brothers Zdanevich, which has been held at the Bolgarskiy Palace and its courtyard annually since 2009.

Art Villa considers contemporary art as an important tool for the promotion of democratic values such as freedom of speech, human rights, promoting ecological awareness and boosting community based initiatives, in order to represent the most important issues in post-Soviet Georgia. For this particular purpose, the goal of the Art-Villa is to readily apply urban projects and contemporary media to activism, art in nature, public art on a regular basis, and offer different thematic workshops for students from various institutes and universities as well as conduct lectures for high school students from Akhalkalaki and adjacent villages.

When the art colony at Garikula was founded in 2000, a time capsule was discovered buried deep beneath the vineyard. In it were boxes of abandoned letters and found objects that are now on display in the colony. Included here is an excerpt from a lost letter written in 1974 by Georgian-American National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence, Fidel Smalls, to artist and Garikula founder, Karaman Kutateladze.

'Wartime drew me to you again, by the faces of Georgia's dawn, by the night sky at the colony. When we were squatting here and there, how you did beckon me by horse, how you fought away ministry then... I bypass you, I enlist Helena _____ for akashic vision and cryptological surrender. Torn apart, we must fall to your feet. Situate a stern, glowing echo. The very same as the crystal hunters, above the river at Garikula, where the sarcophagus lies atop the mountain, where those icons live. Doubting me, you and Vera's vital pneuma, how she did dare to cross over again.'



art villa **GARIKULA**

Philologists in the Republic of Georgia theorized that the Georgian language originated from an ancient secret alphabet known only to Sumerian priests. It was purported that this language encoded great knowledge on astronomy and cosmic philosophy. Though this binds the country's heritage to humankind's first form of writing and raises the position of the Georgian tongue as one of the world's oldest, most mysterious languages, the theories are widely disparaged by both Western and Eurasian scholars.

Here in the Corridors we accept questionable notions. The Corridors exist in the margins between scientific and artistic observation, reality and last night's dreams. We turn to the work of Georgian artist, Nanuka Tchitchoua, as if we are the terminal curio-hunters and she, our high priestess guide. Through Tchitchoua's mythical illustrations, paintings, and films, at last we are able to decode those Sumerian lines of language – without words.

Dream Corridors are vibrant retellings of mythical night-time galavanting, heroic refuge, private tomorrows, war zone escapery, distilled fevers, collected promises. From one citizenship to another, a balanced fantasy from beyond the Black Sea can be colorfully expressed in the new world.

These are last nights' visions imminent.

We enter to attempt discovery, to witness reverie while traveling in space between distances and places out of reach. It is in these narrows you now exist. Until you leave here, you are in a dreaming state.

Entries of Exhibition Objects

Battles of the Species Permanence

Triptych, ink and paint on paper

Acinonyx jubatus

Cervidae

Full Weapon Splendor

Spiral horns, perhaps of the now extinct Scimitar oryx antelope, protrude beyond the head and mouth of a cheetah. Has the oryx been captured? Will it be slaughtered in this moment? This triptych of sparring beasts is a statement on the permanence of battles between species. The antelope is forever fighting off the cheetah, and the cheetah is continually the victor. The artist gives the cheetah prowess and dominance at the forefront of the drawing, but the cat is without an outline; it shares its purview with what it is trying to kill. Perhaps the outer edges of the animal disappear in this moment, and only the horns of the oryx have a perimeter.

The artist is interested in the natural science of animals and how they compare to human beings. With these pieces, Tchitchoua aims to connect natural defenses of the oryx or cheetah to man-made weaponry. Unlike an antler, the horn is a permanent weapon that will never fall off or dismember. An animal born in full health has an inventory of protein and water. Pituitary and testicular hormonal secretions regulate the growth cycle of antlers or horns, and so does the effect of the light in the sky as it changes throughout the seasons. Antlers grow faster than any other bone in the animal body, using so much calcium and phosphorus that males must leach these vital minerals out of other bones and shunt them to the antlers, depleting the rest of their skeleton so severely that they can experience a seasonal form of osteoporosis.

The battle between cultures is as natural as two deer fighting over a doe. Tchitchoua was a child during a time of violence in war-torn Georgia. She draws the nature of relationships and history, what merges and emerges, how forces come together. There is no judgement; there is the understanding that cultures will clash and build weapons to protect whatever is at risk. It is from the histories of violence, contention and war that the artist interprets natural truths. "We are the horned beings, we are fighting beasts." From what parts of our own anatomy, or the anatomy of an entire culture, do we leach the most basic integral values of a people? What societal values were eliminated so that Kalashnikov could invent the selective-fire assault rifle?



Nanuka Tchitchoua,
Acinonyx jubatus,
2013.
Drawing: Ink and paint
on paper.

“Vital minerals are concocted to create extravagant weaponry. Enshrouded in dark stains like diurnal clouds of an African storm, the horns and its predator run so fast they touch no ground and into a death patch they chase.” – Nanuka Tchitchoua



Nanuka Tchitchoua,
Cervidae, 2013.
Drawing: Ink and paint on
paper.

Tchitchoua's maternal great-grandfather was a Rabbi in Azerbaijan who was executed for finding and planning escape routes for Jews imprisoned there. He devised paths through hallways and tunnels, allowing many families to return to their religious freedom. Decades later, because of those freed families, Tchitchoua was welcomed to California, and given the chance to build a new home, or at least to create a new life in a peaceful country. Tchitchoua has questioned the idea of belonging and the concept of home through her illustrations of mythical creatures. She focuses on relationships whether in battle or in love, and with this she imparts memories of injustices. In *Cervidae* we see the outline of an hourglass or scale; a tool for measurement, devising the exact matriculations of a duel. This is also a measurement of how close two entities can come together. What emerges here? What can come from two forces joining at their strongest yet most vulnerable points? She wants to measure danger and risk, but shown in the beauty of animal form. This could represent the need for measurement when one is forced to leave their home and make a new one in a new world, compared to staying in a dangerous war zone.



Nanuka Tchitchoua,
Full Weapon Splendor,
2013.

Drawing: Ink and paint on
paper.

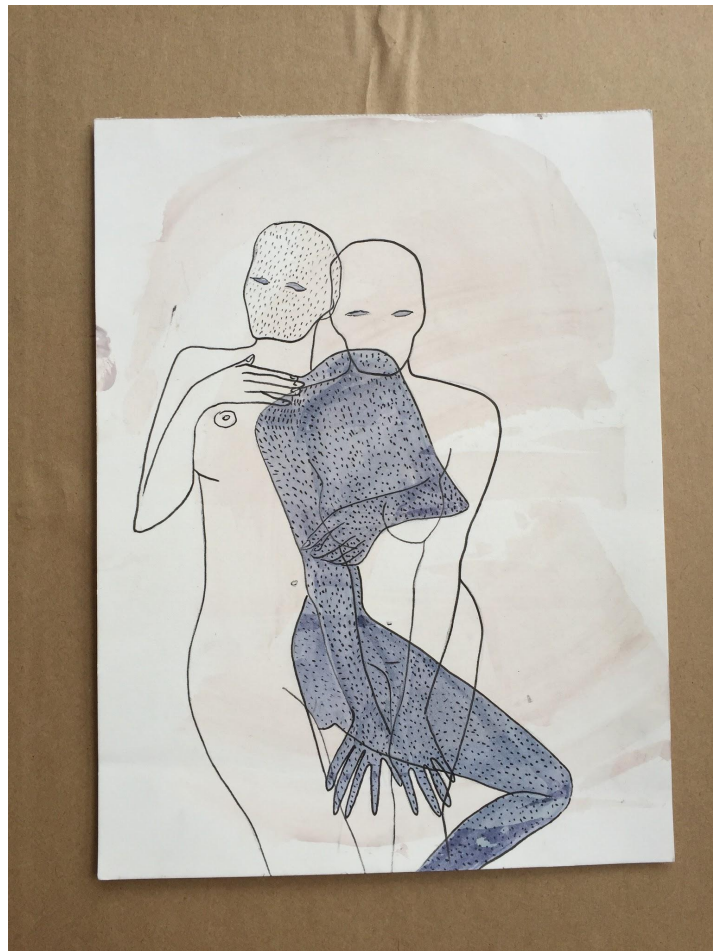
Dotted Figures/Contour Nudes

CONTOUR NUDES 1 & 2

These drawings are studies in aquarelle, a watercolor technique used often by Tchitchoua. Dotted figures, contour nudes, and dancer shapes accompanied by animal relationship all return throughout her studies, paintings, tapestries and illustrations. There are patterns – shaded silhouettes appearing clear – lost or concealed by shapes sometimes in the form of an animal, other times unrecognizable. These characters appear on the maps of Tchitchoua's imprints, so she can imagine a dance across the globe from one country to another. We witness the nude figures in a state of being lost. The dancing contours are without identity, without a nation. Somehow the idea of belonging goes missing so these bodies can appear to be in motion.

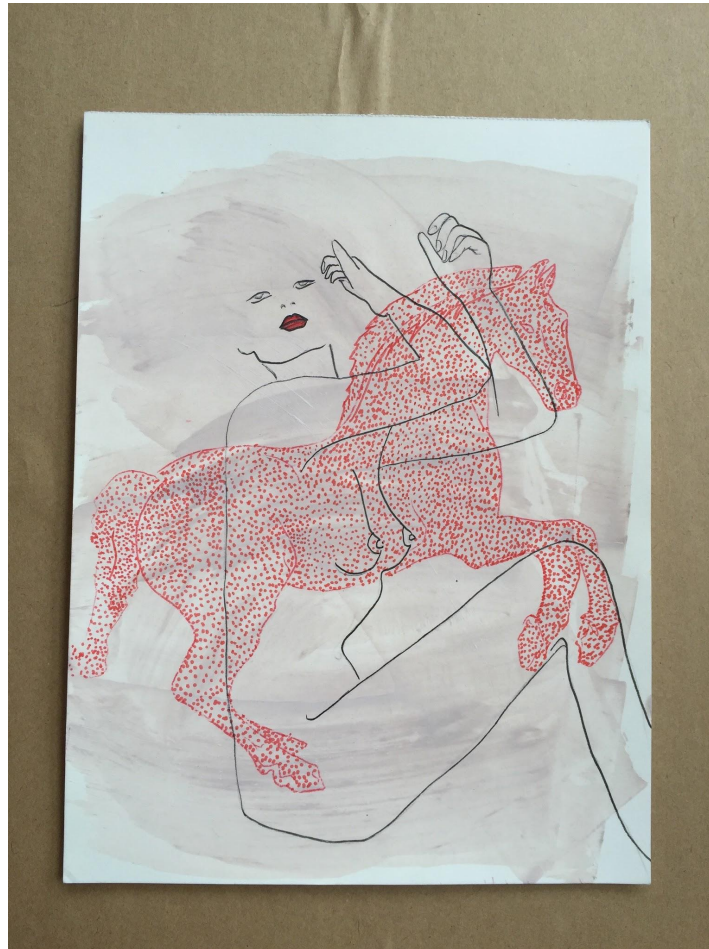
"Privy only to those who are immediately ready to something about it, the dance invites discursive partnership." – Nanuka Tchitchoua

In *Contour Nude 1*, a blue body between two nudes, dotted like a feline, traces a new being, hugged and embraced by both. Or is it only one? Visions from the Dream Corridors appear this way; scattered, parenthetical, in movement. Figures in dots and lines represent Tchitchoua's traveling spaces between the United States and the Republic of Georgia.



Nanuka Tchitchoua,
Contour Nude 1, 2012,
Drawing: Ink and paint on
paper.

In *Contour Nude 2* red dotted horse represents a time in Georgia when empires reigned, where monarchies and the body politic were ruled by Tsarevic Okropir's secret society and his fevered memories of the female King Tamar.



Nanuka Tchitchoua,
Contour Nude 2, 2012,
Drawing: Ink and paint on
paper.

DADAIST PARTIES

Drawings; ink and paint on paper.

"Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety." – *Eastern proverb*

Depicted on the following pages are the "Three Dadaist Monks", dressed in traditional Japanese robes, demonstrating the proverb "see no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil". These figures represent man's life in three dogmas, the God of the Roads, and the three corpses living in everyone's body. In the first drawing, three figures stand at the forefront with hues of sunrise at their backs. Contoured triangular masks assist the unidentifiable beings in their sameness, shading enough of their shaved heads in discrete angles, at slight rotation, left to right, hinting at gravitation towards the illusory fourth monkey. The monks are feigning ignorance under a guarded, organized criminal code.

In the second study, large green masks highlight differences and sameness, as if we have moved closer to the creatures, closer into the sunrise. We can now see connecting lines moving outward from behind the masked faces, wavelengths drawn into pulsation. As the rouging, stained beings continue to feign such ignorance, the codes are revealed at their backs. Circles, dots in lines, boxed and framed at length reveal the codes. No matter the darkness of the masks they wear, those codes of suppression are circulated and released via ray beams of sunlight. In these subtle movements, in the lighted skies above monks who embody that which humans hide, there exists a simian line where codes are broken, and the incongruity of Dada will emerge.

Let the eye fast, let the mouth fast, let the ears fast.



Nanuka Tchitchoua,
Dadaist Parties #2,
2014. Drawing: Ink
and paint on paper,



Nanuka Tchitchoua,
Dadaist Parties #1,
2014. Drawing: Ink
and paint on paper.

Astronomical Diaries

ART BOOK ISSUE 1

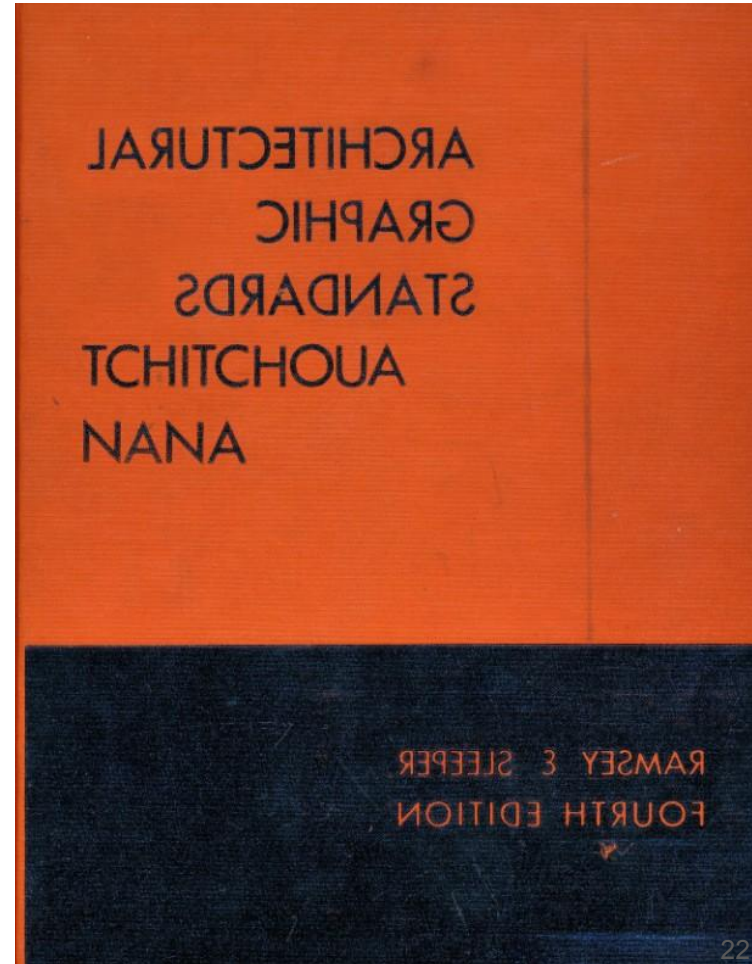
Volume 1 of 3.

Art-book and pages, light sculptures, ink on fabric tapestries.

Film/Animation – Nanuka Tchitchoua in collaboration with Travis Wade Ivy

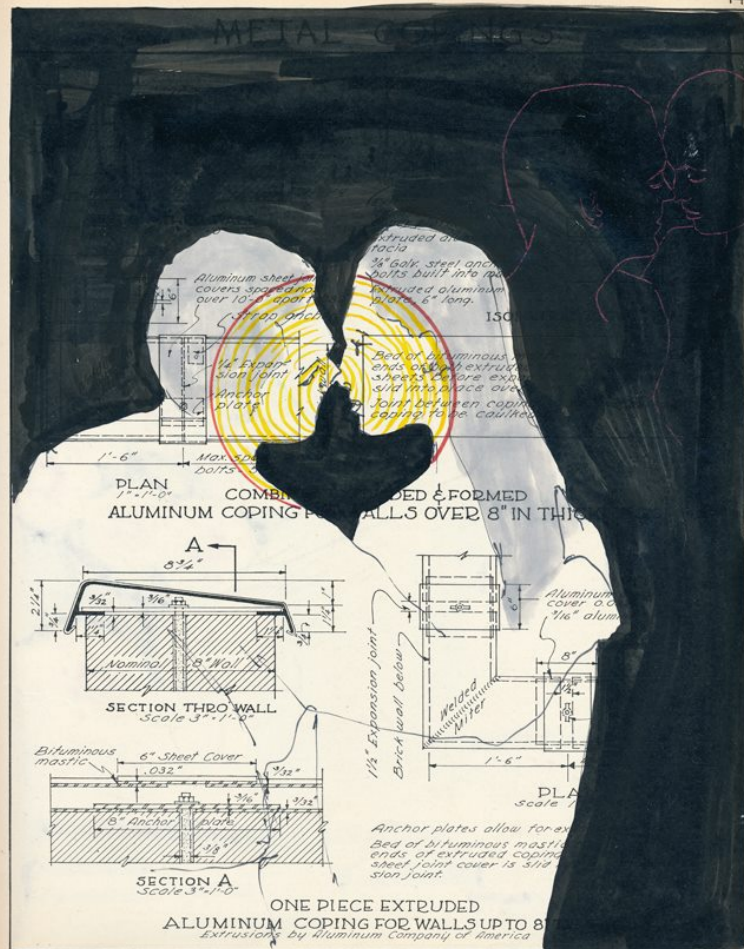
Astronomical Diaries is a serenade to the beauty and mystery of creation. Recycled architectural diagrams provide a foundation for discovery of the universe through texture, symbols and archetypes. Playfully exploring cosmic themes, the human figure, and the rich diversity of living things, this body of work is a joyful chronicle of space and time without beginning, middle, or end.

'The key is to access to my inner child which infuses the pages where there is constant opposition between free and strict and my attempt to balance it. I am interested in colliding images, like a writer who brings two words together and if the two words are right together then you have the magic. I chronicle my imagination of fantasy and reality, past and present, autobiography and universality into a mix where there is really no end, no beginning, no middle. This is my serenade.' – *Nanuka Tchitchoua*





Nanuka Tchitchoua, #193, 2015,
Tapestry: Ink on fabric.



Nanuka Tchitchoua, #141, 2015,
Tapestry: Ink on fabric.



ოცნება დერეფანი