

VALLOIS

36

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# VIRGINIE YASSEF

## DOGS DREAM

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Virginie Yassef **FR**



Dogs Dream. It wasn't meant to be known, 2021

Why shouldn't we grant dreams what we sometimes deny reality: the value of certainty...?

Anthropologist Eduardo Kohn studied the cosmology of the Runa, according to which dreams – the product of the ambulations of the soul – allow humans to escape the certitude of our exception. That very same certitude which prompted the Western world to warrant our creations as 'culture' and to ascribe to 'nature' that which we cannot comprehend, the untamed, the untamable. Only through dreams do we rid ourselves of this "cosmological autism,"<sup>1</sup> this ontological insularity, and finally dialogue with other species, dead and alive, finally recognize their agency and their capacity to think. What we must acknowledge is that dreams, just like conscious thought, are not a human prerogative. Dogs, too, dream, and in their dreams they probe the tremors of the Earth.

Virginie Yassef's 'visions' – yielded by her environments, films, stagings, and photographic series – follow the path of dreams in order to depict relationships between species, to blur perception, and to guide it beyond the limits of human perspective in a maze of sounds and signs. If no scientific analysis ever proved that dogs' behavior could warn us of earthquakes, how then do we rationalize their troubled sleep before the seism, their palpating nostrils, their ears pressed against the muffled rumbling of the asphalt?

Against the myth of method, then, the method of myth. Virginie Yassef is fascinated by the *Throne of Blood*, cinematographic masterpiece of the 1950s by Akira Kurosawa, revisiting the story of Macbeth in a feudal Japan covered with a forest peopled with wraiths and prophetic animals – Yassef, a spiritualist rather than a scientist, presents an exhibition where the enigma is not meant to be solved, a daydream which no one can interpret, a bridge between human and non-human.

01.04

-

28.05

2022

### OPENING NIGHT

31.03

6p.m. - 9p.m.

<sup>1</sup> Eduardo Kohn, "How dogs dream: Amazonian natures and the politics of transspecies engagement", *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 2007, pp. 3-24, by the American Anthropological Association. Online publication.

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Virginie Yassef <sup>FR</sup>

In Kurosawa's film, the samurai are faced with a dilemma metaphorically or tragically echoing our contemporary condition. Are we to fight or to lock ourselves in the fortress? Should we choose combat, we must brace ourselves for a journey through plowing branches, guided only by the cries of birds of ill fortune across a forest labyrinth. "Taking the path of the demon,"<sup>2</sup> which leads to the heart of the spider's web. In this forest of pasteboard beams, which "concretely reveal things that do not exist"<sup>3</sup>

through a spatialized soundtrack, Virginie Yassef invites us to navigate between the natural and the artificial, to cease opposing them, to conflate them even.

If Eduardo Kohn, like a shaman or a cosmic diplomat, encourages us to dream with dogs and think like forests, Virginie Yassef's illusionist power succeeds in defying the physical limits of reality, through interwoven sounds and images born from scratch and "[creating her] reality through false things."<sup>4</sup>

Tristan Bera



Le château de l'araignée, 2013

2. Excerpt from the *Throne of Blood* (蜘蛛巣城, *Kumonosu-jo*) by Akira Kurosawa (1957).
3. Virginie Yassef in conversation with Philippe Quesne and Julie Pellegrin, in *Virginie Yassef, Digressions 04*, Centre d'art contemporain La Ferme du Buisson, in collaboration with Captures Éditions, 2018
4. Ibid