

SOM
NAM
BU
LATIONS 2

critical approaches to sleep
approches critiques du sommeil

THE
SOCIABILITY
OF SLEEP
2021—2023

CALL FOR PAPERS

Somnambulations 2: Critical Approaches to Sleep

June 26-27, 2023, Montreal

www.sociabilityofsleep.ca

Somnambulations 2 is a two-day colloquium for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers that aims to explore the emerging field of critical sleep studies. A follow up to the first edition held in January 2022, we continue to rethink sleep for our restless times.

Sleep moves across, lingers, and expands in critical thresholds of consciousness, but also between the public and private, individual and collective, body and environment, matter and mind—all of which contribute to making sleep a site of radical vulnerability and social risk in a way that requires social forms of care, including care for the collective imaginaries of sleep. We propose that to better address the heterogeneity of sleep we must create conversations across forms and practices that question and expand the methodologies and epistemologies of sleep knowledge (Dement 1999; Kroker 2017). If cinema, for example, was already a dream machine yoking the somatic, the cinematic, and the social, how else can we identify the contagious intermedialities of sleep? If lullabies might tell us something about song, folklore, fear, and care, what do they tell us about sleep itself? From sleep apps and technologies (Mulvin 2018; O'Neill & Nansen 2019) to (stereotyped and/or inaccurate) representations of sleep conditions in both news and fiction (Kroll-Smith 2003; Williams et al. 2008; Higgins 2017); from urban and literary studies exploring the sleepless condition in the urban night (Beaumont 2015; 2020) to the rhythms and chronotopias that govern our lives (Elkouri 2016; Jeffries 2019; Trottier 2019), we are searching for novel ways to address sleep as it reverberates across human experiences day and night.

We welcome contributions from artists and researchers who have mobilized intermedial and intersectional approaches to sleep, from performance art (Bahng et al. 2020) and data visualizations (Urist 2015) to adaptive design strategies (Costanza-Chock 2020; Williamson 2020) and eclectic sleep-focused group exhibitions (Cook 2019). Across such heterogeneous forms of knowledge production, we are interested less in the root (medical) causes of troubled sleep than in the lived experience and somatic time of sleep and sleepers. How can we collectively attune to sleep's epistemologies of obscurity (Glissant 1990, Blas 2016)? How do we make sense of sleep as that most common and also unknowable of human experiences? Who is the expert of one's sleep? What information and technology are trusted to provide information? And how can we straddle the gap between a sleeper's personal experience and external metrics, normativities, machines, and observations? As sleep and rest become increasingly fugitive experiences in our everyday lives, in no small part due to 24/7 illumination in all corners of the world, how are media helping cultivate spaces of shared rest, restoration, and repose?

As contemporary sleep media increasingly rely on the promise of immersive isolation through domestic and individualized ecologies (e.g., sleeping pods and pod hotels), we question what is lost when sleep becomes an experience closed off to others and to the environment, or when we no longer are sovereigns of our sleep. Conversely then, how do others help us make sense of our sleep and our sleeping self? How do the spatio-temporalities of sleep situate it in particular social contexts and, potentially, problematic situations?

This colloquium aims to gather contributions by researchers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. In addition to traditional academic work, we also welcome experiential and experimental forms, including research-creation proposals and artist contributions.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- normative approaches to sleep and its limitations
- sleep as sociable, between the public and private
- sleep in relation to rest, fatigue, sleepiness, dreaming, attention, and other related states and terminologies
- sleep design, environments, architectures, technologies, material culture
- sleep in cinema, television, literature, popular media, the arts, curation, and other forms of culture
- the politics of sleep; rest as resistance; sleep and labour
- social disparities in sleep; the equities of sleep
- feminist, queer, racialized, classed and other non-normative approaches to sleep
- sleeper subjectivities; cultural and historical specificities to sleep knowledge and experience
- the medicalization of sleep and its alternatives
- the sleep-industrial complex
- individual and social caring for sleep
- sleep ailments; sleep disorders; sleep and disability
- epistemologies of sleep and threshold states
- the many ways sleep and its disorders are invisible, marginalized, stereotyped, understudied
- sleep in times of (environmental, economic, etc) crisis

Please submit a 300 word abstract and 50 word bio to: info@sociabilityofsleep.ca by March 15 2023.

Somnambulations 2 will take place simultaneously to the final exhibition of The Sociability of Sleep project in downtown Montreal. While the colloquium will be an in-person event, we recognize that some participants may wish to present virtually due to the connection between conferences and the climate emergency, the problem of limited access to travel funds, and/or Covid-19. To accommodate this, we are offering a limited number of virtual presentations on hybrid panels through Zoom. When submitting your proposal, please indicate whether you intend to attend the colloquium in person or wish to present virtually. If you wish to present in person and would like to be considered for a travel bursary, please mention so in your submission email.

Organized by Aleks Kaminska (U de Montréal) and Alanna Thain (McGill) as part of the The Sociability of Sleep, a project funded by the New Frontiers in Research Fund. The Colloquium is also supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Hexagram network.



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada