



# DREAMSCAPES

*An AI art collection on BrainDrops,  
by Xander Steenbrugge*

WE ALL KNOW THAT FEELING WHEN, IN THE MIDDLE OF AN INTENSE DREAM, THE ALARM CLOCK WAKES YOU UP AND YOU REALIZE HOW THAT ENTIRE WORLD, WHICH ONLY SECONDS AGO FELT TOTALLY IMMERSIVE AND INCREDIBLY REAL, SUDDENLY SEEMS ODD AND OBVIOUSLY IMPOSSIBLE?

THIS COLLECTION CALLED “**DREAMSCAPES**” WILL EXPLORE THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN REALITY AND IMAGINATION THROUGH THE LENS OF AI.

DREAMS ARE FASCINATING PHENOMENA. IN FACT, SCIENCE TEACHES US THAT THE FUNCTIONAL SYSTEM OF NEURAL ACTIVITY THAT CREATES OUR WORLD MAKES NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DREAMING A PERCEPTION AND ACTION VERSUS ACTUALLY EXPERIENCING A PERCEPTION AND ACTION.



***DREAMSCAPES*** IS AN ATTEMPT TO RECREATE, IN WAKING LIFE, THE FANTASTICAL DREAMWORLDS THAT WE ALL EXPERIENCE EVERY NIGHT. USING AN INTRICATE PIPELINE OF MULTIPLE MACHINE LEARNING MODELS PROGRAMMED TOGETHER OVER HUNDREDS OF HOURS OF WORK (BUILDING ON THE INCREDIBLE SHOULDERS OF BRILLIANT DIGITAL ARTISTS BEFORE ME), THE ARTWORKS IN THIS COLLECTION TRY TO RECREATE THE WEIRDLY RECOGNIZABLE AND YET TOTALLY IMPOSSIBLE SCENARIOS OF OUR DREAM LIVES USING MODERN TECHNOLOGY.

MY GREAT INSPIRATION FOR THIS COLLECTION WAS THE INCREDIBLE FILM “*WAKING LIFE*” BY RICHARD LINKLATER. IN THE FILM, THE MAIN CHARACTER EXPERIENCES MULTIPLE SEEMINGLY UNCONNECTED DREAM-ENVIRONMENTS AND IN EACH OF THOSE HAS FASCINATING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT PHILOSOPHY, LANGUAGE, SCIENCE AND LIFE. LIKEWISE, THE PIECES IN THIS COLLECTION EACH CREATE THEIR OWN UNIQUE DREAMWORLD TO BE EXPERIENCED, RATHER THAN UNDERSTOOD.

IN THE FILM, AT ONE POINT, THE CHARACTER BELIEVES HE’S WAKING UP, ONLY TO, MOMENTS LATER, FIND HIMSELF SIMPLY EXPERIENCING YET ANOTHER DREAMWORLD. THIS TRIGGERS A FASCINATING QUESTION: *HOW DOES ONE DISTINGUISH BETWEEN REAL AND IMAGINARY WORLDS? AND WHAT IS REALITY ANYWAY?*



CRAFTED PURELY USING PURPOSEFULLY CHOSEN LANGUAGE PROMPTS (REFERENCED IN THE TITLES OF EACH PIECE) AND AN AI-POWERED PERCEPTUAL SYSTEM (VQGAN + CLIP), THE PIECES IN THIS COLLECTION FORCE THE VIEWER TO CONSIDER HOW THEIR OWN PERCEIVED MEANING OF LANGUAGE IS CONNECTED TO THE VISUAL WORLD CREATED BY THE MACHINE AND HOW THOSE WORLDS MIGHT BE DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE WE INHABIT IN OUR DAILY LIVES.



THROUGH THE CONFLUENCE OF THESE THREE STARKLY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES (OUR OWN DREAMS, THE MACHINE HALLUCINATED WORLDS AND OUR ORDINARY REALITY), ONE CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THE SHEER VASTNESS OF THE SPACE OF POSSIBLE WORLDS.

DO WE LIVE IN THE ONLY “*REALITY*” THERE IS? OR WILL WE EVENTUALLY JUST WAKE UP AND REALIZE IT WAS ALL JUST ANOTHER DREAMLIKE INCEPTION? AND IF THAT’S THE CASE, WOULD THAT BE BAD?

WHETHER YOU BELIEVE IN THE SIMULATION HYPOTHESIS OR A LIFE AFTER DEATH, IN THE END, THE WAY I SEE IT, **THIS**, RIGHT HERE, FEELS JUST AS REAL AS ANYTHING ELSE...



