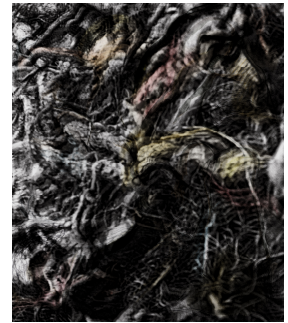


DREAMLINKS

a project by SAVERIO TESOLATO

The project connects several cultural sources and media: its structure is based on three/four (only apparently separate) sections, according to a many-sided combination of literature, graphics, music and video art. Thus, the result is a unitary work, the parts of which reflect in one another in relation to its primary subject: dreams. The topic of dream (and of its *reality*) has been discussed since the beginning of the 20th century thanks to the works of Sigmund Freud on psychoanalysis, which was mainly focused on the elaboration of scientific methods of interpretation of dreams; later, Surrealists have designated dream as a fundamental law of the spirit, i.e. a place where the unconscious discovered by Freud can lead to uncontrolled manifestations, and where you can have a proof of the irresistible truth it embodies and realize that it is the privileged channel of communication between life on Earth and the afterlife.



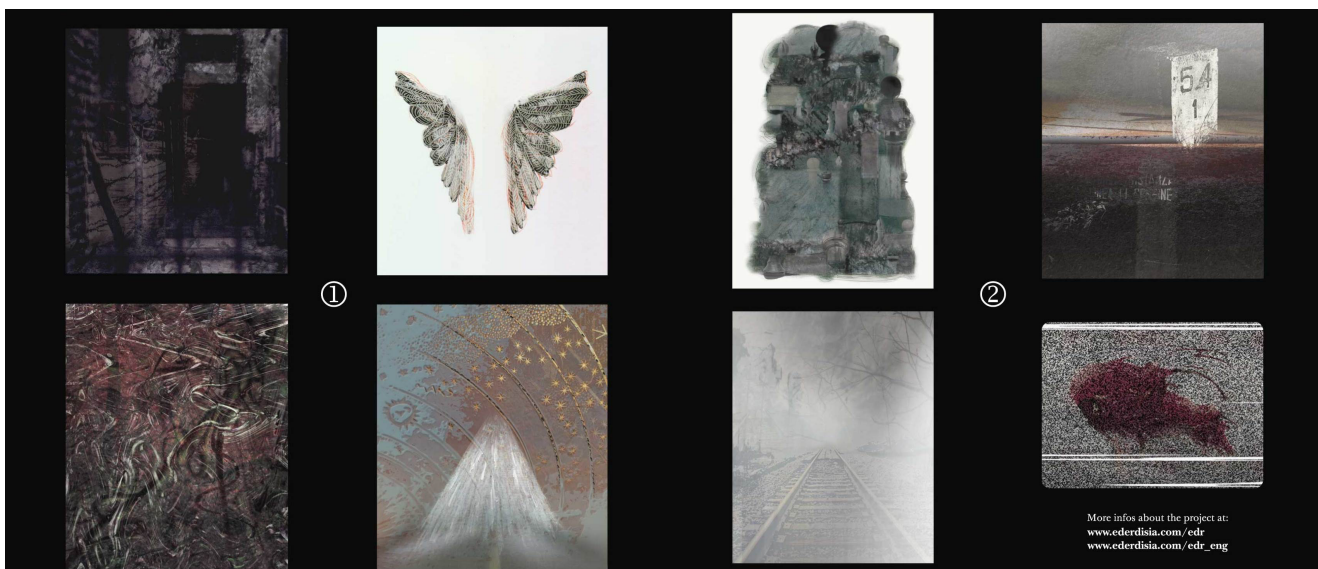
Dreamworms (2017), graphic artwork from mixed-media, 22x26 cm

1. INTRECCI DEL SOGNO (BOOK+IMAGES)



The inspiration for the whole project came in summer 2014, when my oneiric activity was very curious and wild. In particular, two were the dreams my memory could perfectly preserve soon after the awakening, so that I initially sketched out, as roughly as possible, the most relevant oneiric images, such as my mind was instantly able to reconstruct them. Surprisingly, the final result was a real narration of these dreams in form of two tales, due to a sort of a detailed *backward analysis* – sometimes very hard to realize, when not even *agonizing* – of the images my brain had jealously decided to preserve. The narrations dig out the deep depths of a (probably) disturbed but surely complex psyche, able to elaborate images having no trivial interpretations.

After having written the two tales, I realized that several scenes seen in those dreams were pressing for getting out of my brain and deserved more than a simple narrative. Therefore I decided to create some graphic artworks, so as to naturally accompany the text of the tales, in order to try to evoke the most significant images in the dreams.



1 (FIRST DREAM : DROMOMANIA 11-16) – *from left to right, from up to down* :

- **Alprazojail** - « Mi tengo allora i tappi nelle orecchie e rifiuto ogni contatto con l'esterno, ma pure con l'interno (peggiore dell'esterno, del resto)... » (p. 51). Self-built imaginary prison, generated by a depressive state;
- **Asbestosquartz** - « Intanto battiti d'ali d'amianto e quarzo incombono... » (p. 58). Flutter of asbestos and quartz wings : it is a suggestive image created by the protagonist's mind during a phase of dissociative fugue state, a rare psychiatric disorder characterized by reversible amnesia for personal identity, including the memories, personality, and other identifying characteristics of individuality;
- **Spelltangle** - « [...] piani stratificati eppur raggomitolati, in qualche modo, con qualche trucco arcano... » (p. 58). Still during the fugue state, the mind elaborates a vision of some stratified yet curled-up planes, as if it was under some secret spell;
- **Ex-trangement** - « [...] un'attestazione dello stato di non-comunicazione, comprovando, in modo più che evidente, il distacco... » (p. 63). The dream ends with a march on a countryside path where the separation from the « common » world is definitive.

2 (SECOND DREAM : OSSESCACCO) – *from left to right, from up to down* :

- **Chessmishmash** - « Accresciuti nelle dimensioni rispetto a quelle classiche, [...] compaiono blocchi raffiguranti inequivocabilmente alcuni pezzi degli scacchi... » (p. 68). Coming out from a misty atmosphere, suddenly I find in front of me an odd construction that is a high conglomeration of ever changing chess pieces mixed with grey stones. It definitely shocks me and blocks my possible reactions for a while ;
- **Bar-der** - « In direzione frontale compare una lunghissima sbarra posta a mezz'aria, una sorta di prolungato corrimano... » (p. 74). A indefinitely long bar comes to my view: some kind of a border... that I need to overstep... ;
- **Railwhips** - « Mi immergo quieto nel rumore non perfettamente ritmico generato dal contatto con i sassi del ballast... » (p. 77). After having crossed the bar, I found myself on an indefinite railway, walking arrhythmically on the stones of the ballast;
- **Glitchnoises** - « Picchi di brevissima durata, assai brillanti e disturbanti, magari sulle prime – forse in quanto disturbati – ma che in verità presto si rivelano necessari... » (p. 82). On the screen of an odd camera that I found on the rail I see white noise continuously disturbed by impulsive and sharp glitches: it is soon clear that they correspond to life...

2. ENTRELACS DU RÊVE (CD)

FIRST DREAM : DROMOMANIA 11-16

1. **Dromomania 11-16** *for cello and piano*
2. **Marsch des dumpfen Herumwanderers** *for mezzosoprano, cello, percussion and electronics*
3. **Flutter of Asbestos and Quartz Wings** *improvisation for piano, recorded piano and electronics*
4. **S'engouffrer dans ces nœuds...** *for soprano and mezzosoprano*

SECOND DREAM : OSSESCACCO

5. **Ossescacco** *for cello and piano*
6. **Tanz der toten Schachfiguren** *for soprano, cello, snare, percussive samples and electronics*
7. **Sharp Glitches and White Noise (on the Screen)** *improvisation for piano, recorded piano and electronics*
8. **Au-delà... de la borne X** *for soprano and mezzosoprano*



This CD has to be considered as the musical counterpart – made of tracks linked together, each one having a different form of composition – to the dreams the narrations of which are contained in the book *Intrecci del sogno*. After finishing it, I created several musical counterparts to each oneiric representation, in order to link text and music together: as a matter of fact, even though the first compositional structure to be chosen for both dreams was the cello-piano duo (often constructed as a sort of a "match", a game played by two sides), it was clear that new forms were designed to follow the first one, with the aim of ensuring some varied visions and multi-sided interpretations, emerged more and more strongly during the writing of the two tales. So from each dream four tracks have been generated, each one having a different form of composition: to be more precise, the two original cello-piano duos have been the basis to build the further three forms, as if they were "sons" of a "father" from whom they carefully retained an unstable *leitmotiv*; afterwards, two compositions for female lyrical vocals, cello, percussion and electronics were created; then, I could not yield to temptation of the piano improvisation, which fascinated me so much that I decided to boost the improvisational practice – already developed in the recent past – by working with alacrity on *string piano* techniques (enriched with a personal touch, by using several tools to play with) and electronic sound processing, in order to assemble a pre-recorded track, finally used to play a synchronized live *keyboard piano* part; lastly, I directed my efforts towards the composition of two duos *a cappella* (for soprano and mezzosoprano), able to maintain a structural continuity with the previous tracks, and even deepening the conceptualization of the whole work.

Besides, it is the language deliberately given to the title of each piece of music that can make you detect the kind of its composition: as a matter of fact, the instrumental duos have Italian titles, since they are directly related to the images of the dreams and to their narrations (*Dromomania 11-16* and *Ossescacco*, both made by a single word, able to condense the general sense of the entire dream); the vocal-instrumental pieces with percussion and electronic accompaniment have German titles (*Marsch des dumpfen Herumwanderers* [March of the Gloomy Wanderer] and *Tanz der toten Schachfiguren* [Dance of the Dead Chess Pieces]: the choice of their language is surely justified by the dark nature of the tracks...); the two (double) improvisations have English titles, *Flutter of Asbestos* and *Quartz Wings* and *Sharp Glitches and White Noise (on the Screen)*, referring to two peculiar oneiric images that you can find along the narrations; lastly, the solo vocal duos have French titles, *S'engouffrer dans ces nœuds...* [Sinking into Those Knots...] and *Au-delà... de la borne X* [Beyond... the X-Border], hence closing the loop with the title of the work.

As a matter of fact, these vocal compositions have essential connections, not only with the title *Entrelacs du rêve*, but even with the mathematical view of the project, surely fundamental to relate it to the deep meaning of the French word *entrelacs*: in *Knot theory* the definition of *link* (or *entrelacs*, in French) is a generalization of the one of knot (precisely, it is a collection of knots which do not intersect, but which may be linked together). The characterization given in link theory and visual representation of links have been used in order to define the fundamental strategies for the compositional techniques of *S'engouffrer dans ces nœuds...*, where the two voices repeatedly interlace, each one singing at a pitch that must be simultaneously higher or lower than the other voice's one, but often changing it and their reciprocal interval relationships.

As a suitable "starting point" I decided to select the so-called *primary links*, e.g. the ones that cannot be obtained as a connected sum of two non-trivial links (that is, roughly speaking, a procedure allowing to unite links cutting one thread from each link and "attaching" their extremities). The result became a sort of "musical translation" of primary links formed by two rings (according to the classification of Rolfsen (1976), designated by the notations $0^2_1, 2^2_1, 4^2_1, 5^2_1, 6^2_1, 7^2_1, 8^2_1$), as their visual or diagram forms represent.

Recently, a paper has been also prepared where the compositional techniques of this piece are explained in detail. It is entitled *Dreamlinks: Link Theory Meets Music Composition. An Introduction to Compositional Methods Related to Primary Links* and it was presented in July 2018 at the 21st Bridges Conference (in Stockholm, Sweden), the world's largest conference on mathematical connections in art, music, architecture, education and culture. Moreover, the above-mentioned article was published in the Bridges 2018 Proceedings.

As far as the second vocal duo, *Au-delà... de la borne X*, is concerned, the idea for the composition came from a canvas by Vinicio Berti, an abstract Italian painter, entitled (of course...) *Intrecci*. Here several blocks of rectangles (black or red) are placed on different planes, occasionally intersecting each other. Depending on the lengths of the longer dimension of the rectangles, durations of notes sung by the vocalists change; moreover, they have to sing while moving at specified times in oblique directions, parallel but opposite to each other: in this case, I have chosen to represent a sort of *braid* system made up of two threads - as Berti's painting hinted to me – , hence an open structure, having a geometric complex form, evolving with time, as well as the acoustic components the voices produce. This is the reason why this track has been recorded by employing a special

microphone positioning system, in order to catch “moving” audio signals coming from the four corners of a quadrangular room.

Since ancient times, many presentations of various links have often been depicted, more recurrently in low reliefs and mosaics, as, for instance, the famous *Solomon’s knot* (or *link*), that often occurs in ancient Roman mosaics and in several Early Christian cathedrals: in fact, in a religious connotation, the knot represents immortality and eternity, and the union between the Human being and the dimension of God, but a wider range of symbolic interpretations are also known, especially connected to esotericism.

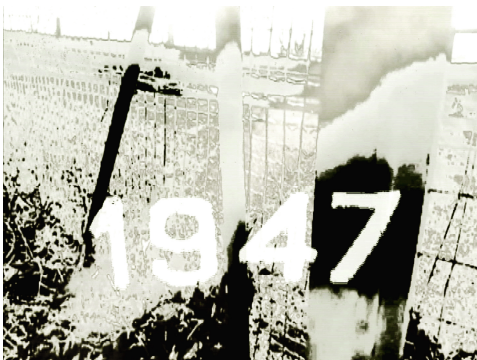


Finally, I could enumerate a myriad of reasons why I felt obliged to start composing music for (those) dreams: in fact, so many times in the past there has been music inside them, both as background music, and in other forms, for instance, as a result of playing instruments in dreams. After waking up from the dreams I have told about here, no sonic memories have been saved, no kind of sounds: but this does not imply that no music was *really* in them. As a matter of fact, it is just thanks to the above-mentioned backward analysis that I could write several pieces of music for each dream, whose compositions have been surely influenced by sense and sensitivity. In any case, it has also been an effective (and powerful) means to interpret these visions, to try to understand the past, to give future a deep meaning.

3. AU-DELÀ... DE LA BORNE X (VIDEO)

This video is of experimental kind and it returns to the image of the indefinite bar seen in the second dream: a subsequent reflection, during the phase of the writing of the tale, brought to light deep and strict connections with a past idiosyncrasy – dated back from the childhood – towards borders. The origin of that feeling is to be found in my numerous trips to Yugoslavia, since from the age of 10, where my parents had relatives (and my father’s parents too). Almost all the material was shot in the town of Gorizia and its close proximity: as a matter of fact, Gorizia is a *border city*, a symbol of too many other towns in the world that have been divided by wars, or by political or even religious reasons. It is clear that the oneiric vision of the indefinite bar to be crossed had some firm connections with my childhood, but especially with the subtly (not too) hidden remains my brain still keeps after so many years, and that will probably not abandon me.

Link: <https://youtu.be/PK8rExDKdbY>



Four sequential frames taken from the video *Au-delà... de la borne X* (2017)