

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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## ISSUE 08

The mental state responsible for allowing daydreams to occur is often attributed to the type of brainwave activity known as Theta. The rhythm belongs to just one of five distinct neurological patterns that follow a Greek alphabet—the final in a series of wave measurements preceded by Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta—which describe the range of reactions to human thought and feeling. One can ‘read’ charts of brainwave activity like the score of a piece of music—the graphed image serving as an indication of either harmony or dissonance without specificity, an abstract symphony.

Yet, the Theta wave holds a deeper metaphor for our purposes. In addition to daydreams, it is Theta that brings us memory, Theta that withdraws our minds from sensing the external, luring us instead to redirect our focus to an internal world. The process enabled by a Theta state is not unlike the experience of writing or thinking about ways in which we view art—it is associative and fertile, generative and unpredictable.

This issue is dedicated to daydreams.

In a concrete sense, much of the work explored in Issue 08 of *THE SEEN* traverses territory built upon dreams and fantasies; it is for this reason the cover of this edition is occupied by a work from Yinka Shonibare CBE’s seminal series *Diary of a Victorian Dandy*, reimagined and installed among the collection at the Richard H. Driehaus Museum, a Gilded Age mansion within Chicago’s Gold Coast neighborhood. As

a complement to a feature on Shonibare’s work written by Joel Kuennen, whose text meditates on the consumption and projection of images born out of colonialism and its structures, an additional insert of the full series of *Diary of a Victorian Dandy* is reproduced within the pages of this publication.

Also contained within this issue are two Special Edition Inserts, one of which includes an extension of noted curator Dieter Roelstraete’s exhibition *Kleine Welt* (which translates to *Little World*) originally installed at the Neubauer Collegium for Art and Society at the University of Chicago. The feature brings together a series of artworks by Caspar David Friedrich and Giorgio de Chirico that have appeared on the cover of books—namely, of twentieth-century philosophy and theory—to propose an alternative way of viewing these paintings within our twenty-first century context. The insert for *THE SEEN* could be said to exist as an expansion of an exhibition about printed matter within another avenue of printed matter. A bibliophile’s dream.

The features section of Issue 08 spans geographies and mediums, tending toward more tactile approaches. Such is the case in the practice of Joan Morey—a name perhaps lesser known within a North American context, but whose exquisite work in installation and performance art is given close consideration by the curatorial collaborative Latitudes, by Max Andrews and Mariana Cánepa Luna. An expansive essay that traces practices of perfume,

its politicized history, and its appearance in contemporary art, written by Matt Morris, brings together three artists in a critique of scent, while a text by Patrick J. Reed on the work of Jason J. Snell—whose sound art and performance work makes use of brainwave detection technology to create compositions—situates the reader within an auditory context (it was by editing this piece that I was introduced to Theta waves).

This is perhaps the best mindset with which to engage in Issue 08; as this abbreviated list of titles indicates, it is an edition enhanced (not lessened) by a reader’s pause.

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Editor-in-Chief

An immense thank you to my Staff Writers; Associate Editor, Gabrielle Welsh, for her work in assembling this edition; our dedicated advertisers; Newcity Custom Publishing for managing production and distribution; and Ashley Ryann of the JNL Graphic Design for her artistic direction in designing this edition.