



# The Sleepworker

*Cyrille Martinez , Joseph Patrick Stancil (Translation)*

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"As New York, capital of the twentieth century, recedes from memory, it becomes more like Paris; we flock to it to pay tribute to the great things that once happened there. New York is now a miasma of apocryphal myths feasting on its own corpse. On these pages, Martinez spins hazy rumor and wilting gossip into blistering contemporary fiction, holding up Warhol's mirror to the myth of Warhol himself. The result is a delicious celebration of simulacra where, like New York New York itself, nothing is true, but everything is permitted."—Kenneth Goldsmith

John is a poet. Only John almost never writes poems, because he is also unemployed. He lives with four friends, and they squat in a loft in New York New York, a fantastical city that resembles the Big Apple, but also any other city where artists live. They throw fabulous parties and practice group sodomy. That is, until John meets Andy.

Andy is an artist. Well, he is if you define art as something that people don't want but the artist wants to give them anyway. A gallery owner with Tourette syndrome "discovers" his work and Andy is on his way to being famous. John, on the other hand, is hard at work at being unemployed, drinking all night and sleeping all day—which leaves him very little time for writing poems. Andy, watching him sleep, has an intriguing idea for a piece of art that he thinks will allow John to get paid for what he does best.

Using the story of Andy Warhol and John Giorno and their film *Sleep* as a starting point, *The Sleepworker* reads like a Warhol film on fast-forward.

**Cyrille Martinez** is a poet and novelist living in Paris. This is his English debut.

**Joseph Patrick Stancil** has studied French and translation at UNC-Chapel Hill and New York University. He currently lives in New York, New York.

## The Sleepworker Details

Date : Published October 28th 2014 by Coach House Books (first published August 18th 2011)

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# **From Reader Review The Sleepworker for online ebook**

## **Anoja Muthucumaru says**

Anyone who has had the misfortune of encountering a culture snob, can appreciate the honesty and humour this translation has to offer.

It simultaneously pokes fun at itself and somehow still shows the importance of art.

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## **James Sorensen says**

I won this book as part of the Goodreads First-Read program.

This book is more of a novella at 111 pages than a novel. Cyrille Martinez gives the reader a look at the relationship between Andy Warhol and his lover/friend John Giorno.

Taking place in the early 1960s we get a satirical, somewhat cynical, look at the arts community in New York, New York. We are shown the building of the "Writers Quarter" where those who do not write are excluded. Yet, because of the exclusive nature of the community the rent and costs increase and the writers are driven out. Cyrille also exposes the casual nature of gay sex at this time. Although not overly graphic the depictions of gay sex may make some readers uncomfortable.

The novella revolves around the poet John Giorno who rarely writes poetry because he sleeps so much. His constant unemployment allows for this need to sleep. Although at one time a rising star he fails to reach his potential. Andy, of course, is a pop icon and the book looks at the creation, in 1963, of Warhol's film *Sleep*. A 5 1/5 hour "anti-film" of John Giorno sleeping. The book, by the nature of a film like *Sleep*, shows the pretentiousness of the art community. Whether intentional or not.

This short book has a crisp, witty, snappy style of writing. A very literary type of writing, it is well done and is a very interesting read. I give kudos to Mr. Martinez's writing style and a quick, interesting voyeuristic look into the lives of some of the early pop art icons in early 60s America. A true biography this is not. Just a slice of two literary lives.

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## **willowdog says**

Playing off a relationship between Andy Warhol and John Giorno and their movie *Sleep*, this novel features a terrific omniscient narrator. Style is everything in this novel.

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## **!Tæmbu?u says**

## Vampire Who Baked says

Perfectly translates Warhol-esque obsession with semantic saturation into the print medium. After a while, it gets a tad tedious, but a fun, frolicky, light read that never takes itself too seriously.

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## Christian Paula says

This was an interesting read. I picked this up on a whim because I was intrigued by the cover and the mention of Andy Warhol. What I learned, though, was that I am not the reader for this book. As much as I liked reading this one, *The Sleepworker* is a book about artists for artists in a time in New York that now exists outside of Manhattan. There is a lot of word play, with much look-at-me from Martinez. A small one with an equally small audience.

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## Tünde Ecem Kutlu says

sanat, sanatç?, sanat nedir, sanat? do?as? nedir, sanat nas?l yap?l?r, sanatç? nas?l ya?ar  
ya da andy warhol ve john giorno nas?l ya?ad?lar, yeralt? edebiyat?n?n önemli isimleri nas?l bir araya  
geldiler, sanatlar?n? nas?l yapt?lar, onlar?n yapt?klar?na sanat denilebilir mi, yeralt? edebiyat?n?n önemi  
nas?l bilinebilir  
uzun y?llara yay?lm?? bir dönemin de bir sanatç?lar toplulu?unun bir araya geldi?i bir alanlar listesi gibi bu  
kitap; üstüne üstlük gerçek isimleri ciddiyetsizce anlat?yor ve o isimlerin do?as?na uygun oldu?unu  
dü?ündü?üm cümleleri kullan?yor. kimin kim oldu?u önemsiz, küçük ara?t?rmalarla kimlikleri ortaya  
ç?kabilecek gerçek insanlar?n hayatlar?.  
ya da günümüz sanat? üzerine yap?lm?? keyifli bir inceleme

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## Orhun Kaya says

Çok uzun zamandır ve çokça üstüne dü?ündü?üm toplumla alakalı argüman?m var ve beklemedi?im bir  
?ekilde bu kitapta bu argüman? destekleyecek ?eyler bulmak beni ?a??rtt??? kadar mutlu etti. Kitaptan  
okudu?um ve yorumlad???m kadar?yla bu 50 y?l önce de böyleydi. Bak?n etkilenmek, örnek almak çok  
farklı? bir kavramlar kesinlikle bu ayrı?m? gözeterek dü?ünüyorum kafamdaki her ?eyi. Fakat günümüzde de  
oldu?u gibi, hatta say? git giderek art?yor, baz? insanlar?n yapt?klar? her türlü davran???; mesela kitapta  
oldu?u gibi yaz? yazmak, yazar olmak, sanat üretmek, belki güleceksiniz yine kitapta oldu?u gibi belirli bir  
ayakkab? giymek, gözlük takmak kendi isteklerinden veya kendileri olmaktan kaynaklanm?yor. Bunlar?  
yap?yor olmak insanlara, bunlar? yapmaktan daha fazla de?er kat?yor çünkü. Yani o gözlü?ü takarak, yaz?  
yazarak, yazar olmaya çal??arak aslında sat?n ald??? içinde olan veya kendi içinde kar??lamak istedi?i  
de?erler de?il. Yapm?? olmak için belirli bir yere ait olmak için belirli bir s?n?ftan gözükmek için belirli bir  
kar??lık görmek için... Peki artık ba?ka bir yere ait olmak, ba?ka bir s?n?ftan gözükmek, ba?ka bir kar??lık  
görmek isterse insano?lu? O eskiden de?er olarak gördükleri de?ersizle?iyor galiba. Bir gün gözlük takmay?  
savunmam?z gerekirse o insanlar orada olacaklar m?? Sizi bilmem ama ben insan? o kadar cömert bir varlık

olarak görmüyorum. Peki bunlar? hakk?yla yapanlara sayg?s?zl?k de?il mi bu? Onlar?n yapt?klar?n? de?ersizle?tirmek de?il mi? Daha de?ersiz bir ?ekilde geride b?rakmak de?il mi? Hatta ortada de?er falan b?rakmamak desem... Korkar?m hep böyle giderse gözlük takmay? savunmam?z gerekti?inde yan?m?zda kimseyi bulamayaca??z. Ve evet ben bu kitaptan bunu anlad?m.

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**Tobias says**

Review TK.

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